■ **WORLD / A8**
AIDS epidemic looms in Indonesia, says UN official

■ **BUSINESS / B1**
Consumers confident but prospects remain bleak, says BSP poll

■ **NEWS / A2**
4,775 OFWs languish in foreign jails

■ **ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1**
Dollywood: Kitchie's manager speaks up

Too little for health care in DOH budget, says group

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHATEVER MEASURE THE GOVERNMENT plans to take to address the worsening health care crisis doesn't seem to show in the proposed P1.05-trillion national budget for next year.

Each Filipino will stand to get only 33 cen-

TOO LITTLE/ A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

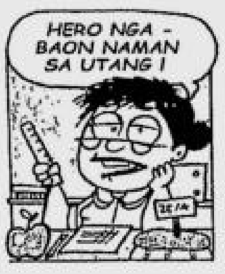
Even heroes pay bills, say teachers seeking wage hike

By DJ Yap

TEACHING IS A HEROIC profession. But heroes have bills to pay and families to support.

"We admit it. Many of us sell products to our

EVEN HEROES/ A5


HERO NGA - BAON NAMAN SA UTANG !

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, November 29, 2005 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 354 P18
website: www.inq7.net

RP gold haul rises to 25

Ong dared to produce 'Hello Garci' original tape

By Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora, TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza

IT'S THE TAPE, STUPID!

"They have to show us that there was such an original tape, if such indeed existed," former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano told INQUIRER reporter Michael Lim Ubac in an interview on Sunday somewhere in central Mindanao.

Following Garcillano's declaration that the alleged wiretaps were fabricated, Malacañang and administration lawmakers yesterday challenged the opposition to produce the original recording purporting to show that President Macapagal-Arroyo stole last year's election.

Senators and congressmen demanded that Samuel Ong, the former deputy chief of the National Bureau of Investigation who claimed on June 10 he had the "mother of all tapes," come out of hiding and prove Garcillano wrong.

Ong's lawyer, Homobono Adaza, told the INQUIRER that Ong was seriously considering testifying in the Senate, not in the House of Representatives, which Adaza said was "controlled by Malacañang."

Saying there were continuing threats on Ong's life, Adaza said "the Senate must ensure that if he testifies in the name of national interest, he will not be killed in the process."

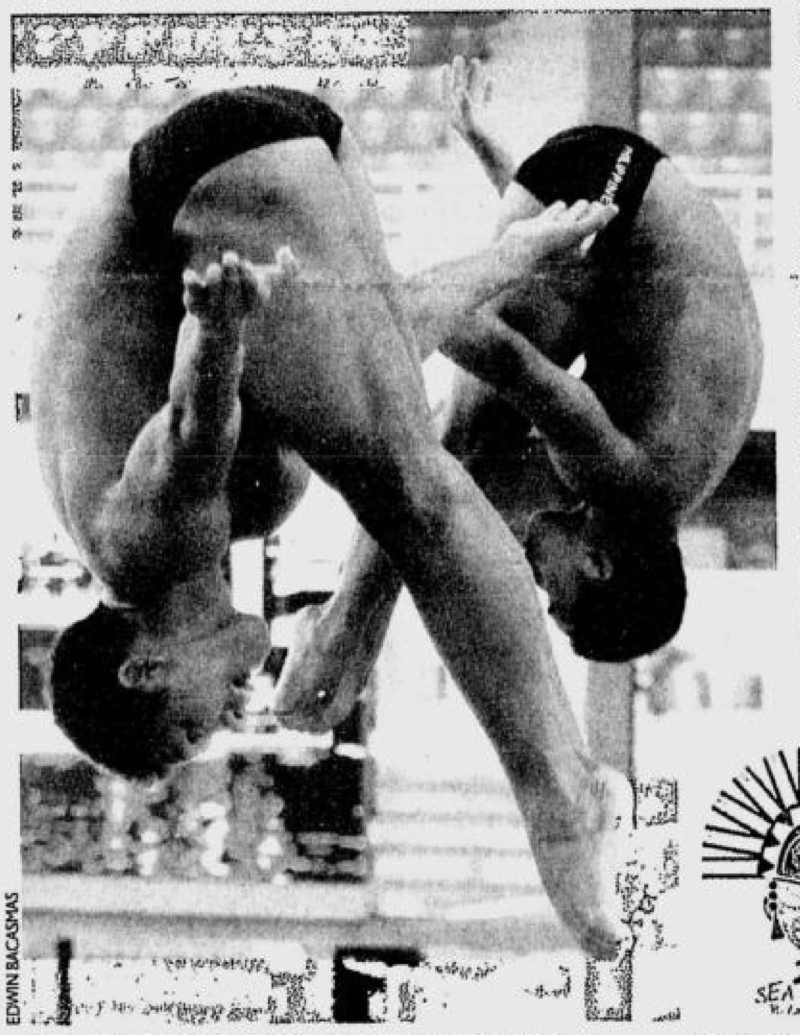
The President's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said Garcillano was "the best person to pass judgment on the authenticity" of the "Hello Garci" tapes.

"He is the alleged subject of those tapes," Claudio said in a phone interview, noting that Gar-

ONG DARED/ A6

JOAN BONDOC

HENRY Dagmil makes a beautiful landing after clearing a new SEA Games mark of 7.81 meters and clinching the gold in the men's long jump.


EDWIN BACASMAS

ZARDO Domenios and Nino Carog execute a winning routine in men's 3-meter springboard synchronized diving.

Games sked today in Sports, Page A18

CHITO CLEOFAS

MERCEDITA Manipol sprints ahead of Pa Pa of Burma (Myanmar) to win the women's 10,000-meter run.

Leads race for medals on Day 2 of SEAG

By Roy Luarca

FILIPINOS FOUND A treasure trove in the pool and struck a gold mine on the track to pace the medal chase of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday.

Diver Sheila Mae Perez became the meet's first double-gold medalist and long jumper Henry Dagmil broke the meet record with a golden leap as the Philippines jacked up its output for the day to 20 golds with contributions from taekwondo, karatedo, wushu, fencing, tennis and billiards.

As of 11 last night, the Philippines had a total of 25 golds, 10 silvers and 15 bronzes in the 11-nation biennial meet. Reigning overall champion Vietnam was running second with a 14-11-15 tally, towing Thailand (7-12-17), Malaysia (7-10-8) and Indonesia (6-9-9). *(More SEAG stories in Sports, Pages A17-A21.)*

Perez topped the women's 3-meter springboard individual event to complement her triumph with Ceseil Domenios in the 3-meter springboard synchronized on Sunday and spark the Filipino divers' three-gold sweep at the Trace Aquatics Center in Los Baños, Laguna, yesterday.

The 23-year-old Dagmil, ignoring a slight left hamstring pull, cleared 7.81m to eclipse the 7.79m mark set by Malaysian Mohd Zaki Sudri in the Jakarta edition in 1997.

President Macapagal-Arroyo joined thousands of spectators who cheered lustily for the coun-

RP GOLD/ A13

Garcillano protected by armed Moro groups

By Michael Lim Ubac

COTABATO CITY—IS THE MOST elusive man in the country being shielded from the public eye by an influential Moro group?

In an interview on Sunday somewhere in Maguindanao, former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano claimed he was being protected by "Moro friends" with links to armed movements in Mindanao.

Garcillano said this allowed him to roam provinces in Mindanao the last five months undetected by the authorities.

"I feel that I'm more safe here with my friends," said Garcillano, who was wearing a *tubao*, an indigenous head scarf worn by Moros and *lumad*, or local tribal groups, alike.

In the two-hour interview on a deserted roadside in the shadow of a mountain, the man whose alleged involvement in election chicanery had deeply divided the country and left the people struggling for answers to many questions, repeatedly denied rigging the 2004 elections to ensure President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory.

"I'll tell everything that I know [when I face Congress]," he said.

Garcillano laughed off reports that he had left the country to avoid being compelled to face an investigation into the "Hello Garci" scandal.

"Who said I left the country?" he said, chuckling.

Tracking Garcillano was not easy.

Meeting him was the culmination of a four-month effort, which started when Garcillano personally called this reporter on July 5 at the height of a joint congressional inquiry into alleged wiretapped conversations between him and Ms Arroyo.

He had insisted in that July interview that he was not so stupid as to do anything that would "destroy the electoral process in this country."

GARCILLANO/ A6

RP judicial reforms cited as model

By Armand N. Nocum

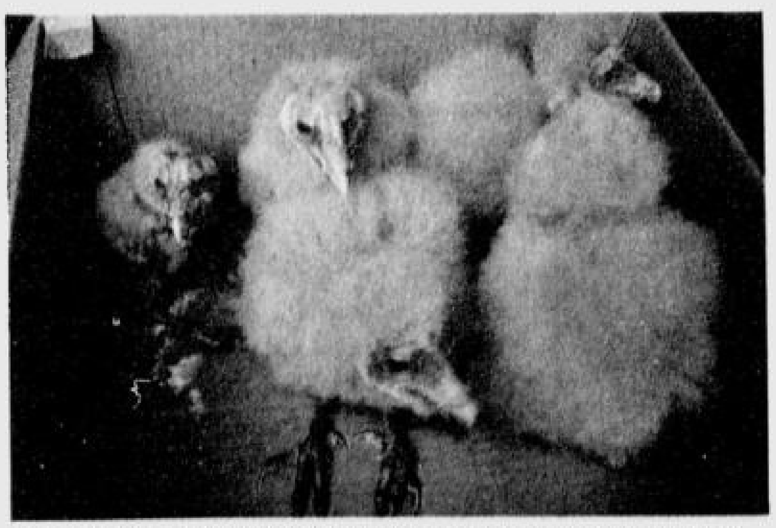
WIDELY MALIGNED BECAUSE of the alleged corruption and incompetence of some judges, the Philippine justice system is now winning recognition as a role model of judicial reform, a senior jurist said.

"The Philippines is seen by many countries now as both a country which was in need of reform and a country now which is the source of reform," Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban said on the sidelines of the International Conference and Showcase on Judicial Reforms, which opened in Makati City yesterday.

"Somehow, we're a poor country, we're a developing country, but our judiciary has made an impact in the world that we are now the role model on how to conceive, plan, develop and

RP JUDICIAL/ A13

Children find 5 grass owl nestlings in Parañaque



YOUNG scavengers found these grass owls in a deserted grassy lot.

By Jocelyn R. Uy
Metro

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT ONE owl species can still be found in certain parts of Metro Manila where tall grasses grow.

Last week, five grass owl nestlings were found in a deserted grassy lot in Parañaque City.

They were found by children scavenging in an open area in Sitio Nazareth, San Antonio Valley II, Barangay San Isidro, Ed Valen, city information head, said yesterday.

"The barangay officials confiscated the birds when they saw the children taking them away in a box," Valen said.

The baby owls were turned over by the local government to the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Barangay Chair Eusebio Japlos and Councilor Joey Rogacion brought the nestlings to the City Agriculture Office headed by Petra Ferolino for documentation before they were turned over to the DENR.

"It is rare to find such wildlife living in a highly urbanized area and I am confident the DENR will properly take care of the owl nestlings," Mayor Florencio Bernabe said.

Bernabe urged city residents to immediately notify the authorities when they find other wildlife species in their areas.

Valen noted that Barangays San Dionisio and BF were also home to grass owls.

According to "Birds of the Philippines," grass owls (*Tyto capensis*) are adapted to life on the ground and usually hide in tall grasses. They are nocturnal but sometimes fly during the day.

Grass owls are specialist hunters of small rodents. "Hunting is by low, quartering flight followed by a quick plunge into the grass when prey is detected,"

CHILDREN/ A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Second FRONTPAGE

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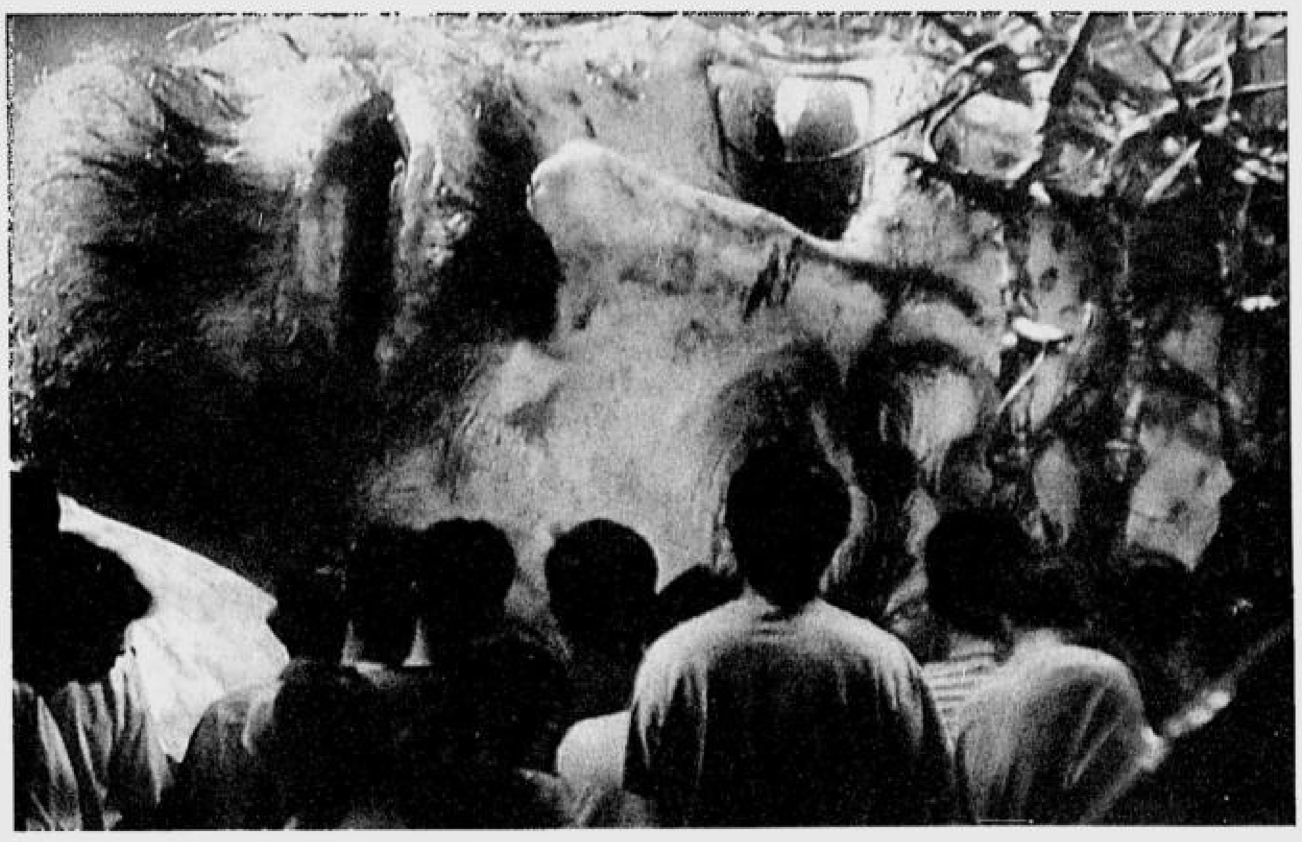
WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers becoming widespread over the Eastern section. Visayas and Mindanao will also have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/11/29/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains



PASSION AND CHRISTMAS IN NOVEMBER
Too early for Christmas, too late for Holy Week. Children marvel at the giant Christmas tree festooned with twinkling lights at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City. Across the street, on the side of the Big Dome, adults watch "The Passion of the Christ" on a huge outdoor screen presented by a religious group.
ERIK ARAZAS

DNA tests sought for 6 US soldiers in Subic rape case

By Tonette Orejas and Ansbert Joaquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—THE lawyers of the Filipino woman who has accused six US servicemen of raping her at the Subic Freeport want science to aid in the search for truth and justice in the case.

The lawyers filed a motion compelling the woman's alleged abusers to undergo DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing, one of the two investigating prosecutors confirmed Monday.

The motion, filed at 5:30 p.m. last Friday at the Department of Justice office here, did not say why the tests were being sought, but Assistant Prosecutor Raymond Viray said it was likely for identification purposes.

Reacting to the motion, Jose Justiniano, lawyer for suspect Albert Lara, said it could be that the complainant wanted to "determine who she had sexual intercourse with."

"It looks like she's not sure who among the six respondents had sex with her," said Justiniano in a phone interview.

Every individual has a unique DNA or genetic makeup. A test would prove a person's identity conclusively.

In the rape complaint, one of the pieces of evidence was a used condom.

The condom was found in the victim's underwear by the people who came to her assistance after she was dumped by the suspects near Subic's Alava Pier close to midnight on Nov. 1.

The witnesses said they saw the woman being unloaded from a van by two Caucasian-looking men while an obviously drunk African-American sat on the curb nearby.

Any bodily fluids that may have been left in the condom will be compared to the DNA of the suspects.

Viray said one of the woman's lawyers, Ma. Sheila Bazar, had told him the DNA test results would be used if the case went to trial.

Viray said he told Bazar the test results would not be ready by Nov. 29, the second and final hearing date for the preliminary investigation.

He said the defense motion would only be tackled at the hearing where the respondents would be asked to comment.

Going by a jurisdictional provision in the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, Viray said the City Prosecutor's Office was going to give a copy of the motion to the US Embassy through the Department of Foreign Affairs.

'HEROES' IN DISTRESS

4,775 OFWs in jail

By Philip C. Tubeza

CONGRESS IS LOOKING FOR MORE WAYS TO ASSIST OVERSEAS Filipino workers, or OFWs, specially after the Department of Foreign Affairs reported that almost 5,000 of them were languishing in jails abroad—in all continents but Antarctica—the chair of the House appropriations committee said yesterday.

Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. said one proposal his committee has decided on was to increase the amount Philippine embassies are allowed to keep of the income they generate in the form of fees for various consular services such as the issuance of visas and renewal of passports. This income could then be used for OFWs in distress, including the 4,775 Filipinos in foreign jails.

"This is also in appreciation of the robust dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers," Andaya said.

No estimates were immediately available on how much in consular fees Philippine foreign missions are able to generate annually. Embassies were required in the past to remit the bulk of this income to Manila.

To assist Filipinos in conflict with the law and culture abroad, Andaya said the 2006 budget bill would allow foreign posts to retain up to 50 percent of their income from consular services, which was substantially higher than in the past.

Another P251 million, or five percent of the DFA's 5.3 billion budget next year, has also been earmarked as "building fund" to spruce up decrepit consular offices, Andaya said.

These appropriations are separate from contingency funds under the discretion of Labor agencies, such as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, he added.

Andaya said the DFA's 2004 "global situationer" on OFWs stressed the need to increase aid to Filipinos who have "fallen into the cracks of global labor migration."

The 430-page report—culled from dispatches of the country's 82 diplomatic posts—lists some of the "triumphs and travails" of the estimated 5.7 million Filipinos working abroad.

The report showed that, as of the end of 2004, some 4,775 Filipinos were languishing in foreign jails, 5,883 had sought help from Philippine embassies for a variety of reasons during that year; and 12, 613 had to be sent back to the Philippines with government help, Andaya said.

While he described the number of Filipinos detained abroad as a "matter of concern," Andaya said they represented only 1/1200th of the total number of OFWs.

"But each one must be helped because we have always been guided by the policy that one Filipino in jail abroad is one too many," he said.

Of the 4,775 OFWs in foreign jails last year, 1,103 were women, he added.

And of the 82 Philippine missions abroad, only 12 reported not having aided a citizen in detention, "which means that in every continent except Antarctica, in every climatic zone, you can find a Filipino behind bars," Andaya said.

He said Malaysia, whose jails—mostly in Sabah—harbored 1,200 Filipinos last year, topped the list of countries where Filipinos were detained.

Israel was second, with the Philippine embassy in Tel Aviv reporting that 1,028 Filipinos were detained in jails in Ramle, Hadera, Nazareth, Beersheva and Holon. Next were Japan (314), Saudi Arabia (213), Singapore (192), Kuwait (47) and Hong Kong (77), Andaya said.

He added that work-related and immigration concerns were the oft-cited reasons for the incarceration of Filipinos.

Among "OFWs in distress," or those who ran to Philippine consulates for help, almost 40 percent—or 2,122 of the global tally of 5,583 cases—were recorded in Kuwait, Andaya said.

All of those who sought refuge in the Philippine embassy in Kuwait were Filipinas, "runaways who fled from work-place maltreatment and oppression, ranging from sexual molestation, physical abuse and nonpayment of salaries," he added.

Andaya said the United Arab Emirates followed Kuwait, registering 797 "Filipinos in distress." Third was Singapore, with 448 cases, according to the DFA report.

Of the recorded 12,613 deportations and repatriations of Filipinos worldwide in 2004, about one-third, or 4,476, came from Malaysia, after it cracked down on undocumented guest workers last year, Andaya said.

Next was Saudi Arabia, with 1,094, "which is a small percentage" of the one million-strong Filipino community in that country; while a close third was Kuwait with 1,043 cases, which "is not surprising" as it topped the countries with the most number of distressed OFWs, he added.

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Palace hopes more senators follow Pimentel

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG IS HOPEFUL MORE SENATORS would see the light like Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who has changed his mind about turning Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Constitution.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said Pimentel's now agreeing to a constituent assembly was a "good sign."

"We're hopeful this is an indication of support from other members of the Senate," he added in a phone interview.

Claudio said he did not want to speculate on why Pimentel, who like the other senators had staunchly been against a constituent assembly to amend the Charter, had a change of heart, noting only that "it is enough that we're comforted by the fact that he has agreed to a constituent assembly."

Senators are for a constitutional convention of elected delegates, as opposed to a constituent assembly made up of congressmen and senators, to amend the Constitution.

"The best and democratic way is for the Senate to lend its support and cooperation (to the Charter change initiative)," Claudio said.

Equally elated over the development was Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, who noted in his "The View from the Palace" newspaper column on Sunday how some in the opposition "are beginning to see the light on the need to undertake this change."

"Charter change is necessary to revitalize a degenerated political system that is hampering our growth as a nation," Bunye said.

But he also noted that the Palace took exception to "the view expressed by some, which focuses simply on personalities rather than fundamental political and economic reforms."

'Strong heart' keeping NBI chief alive–doc

By Margaux C. Ortiz

HIS "STRONG HEART AND FERVENT will to live" have been greatly helping National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco survive his current ordeal, according to his doctor.

"Aside from being physically fit, (Wycoco) has also shown calmness and the positive attitude needed in dealing with his delicate situation," Manila Doctors Hospital medical director and cardiologist Dr. Dante Morales told reporters in an interview yesterday afternoon.

Morales said Wycoco's vital signs stabilized over the weekend.

"But he still remains in a deep coma," the doctor said, explaining that Wycoco's vital organs needed to be supported by medicines and machines in order for him to survive.

Morales said all the necessary tests had been conducted on Wycoco, all of which showed there has been no significant change in the patient's condition.

"What we declared in earlier medical bulletins remains unchanged," Morales said.

Past medical bulletins said medicines and intravenous fluids were controlling Wycoco's vital signs while a ventilator was helping him breathe.

In the bulletins, the hospital's neurologists and neurosurgeons said Wycoco's condition "was still poor but still hopeful."

"Friends of the family have also been sending doctors to examine the patient, but they have rendered the same conclusion as ours," Morales said.

Wycoco's family remained hopeful the NBI chief would survive his illness.

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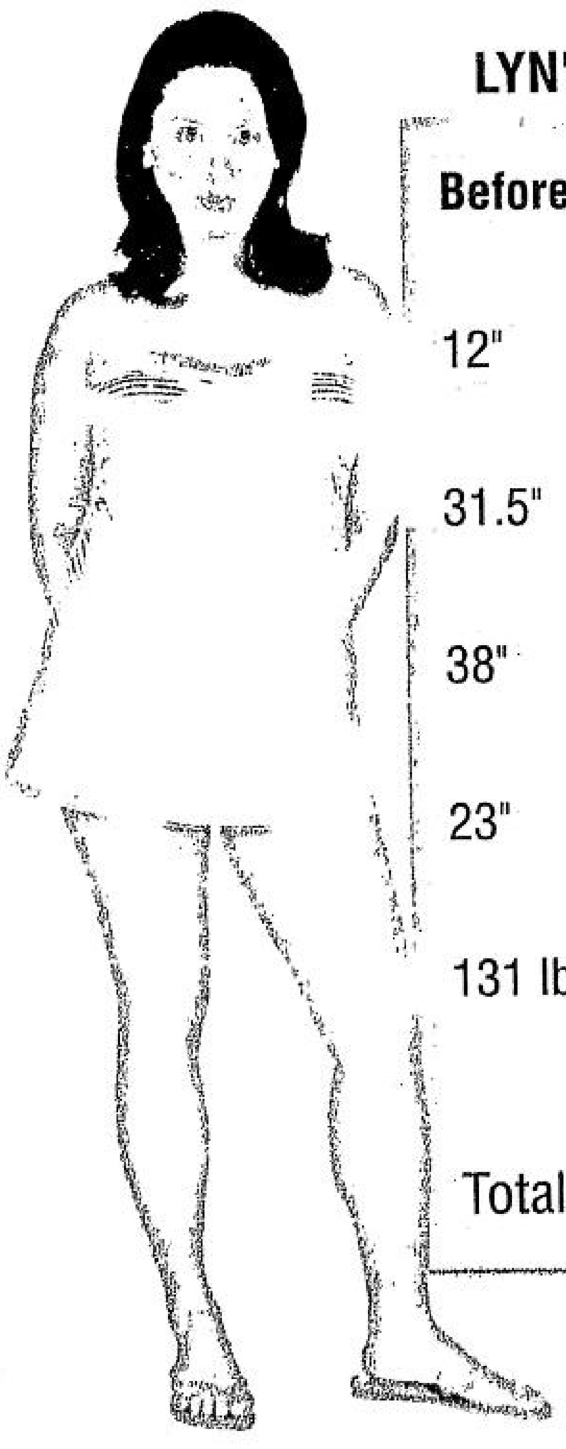

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23"	Thighs	19.75"
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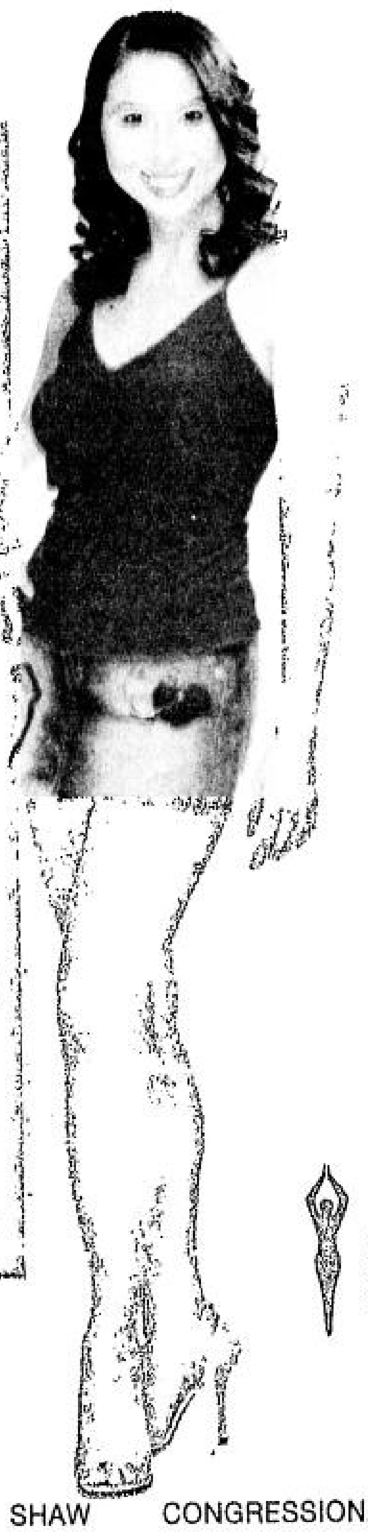

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HEALTH CRISIS

School teachers asked to monitor pupils' health

By Alcuin Papa

IN LIGHT OF THE CRISIS BROUGHT on by the shortage of doctors and other health care workers as well as the closure of many hospitals, the Department of Education (DepEd) has advised public school teachers to watch out also for the health of their pupils in addition to teaching their lessons.

The DepEd had previously reported a high incidence of malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies among public school students, specially in impoverished rural areas and urban slums.

Dr. Thelma Santos, director of DepEd's Health and Nutrition Center, said that if teachers would be more observant of their students, they could contribute to the early detection or prevention of illness among students and ease the pressure on DepEd's health workers like herself.

"Our school nurses and doctors cannot tend to all the 19 million public school students," she said. "It would be less toxic for our health professionals if our teachers could also help spot early signs of health problems in their students before it goes too far."

According to the center's latest statistics, 65 percent of public school children between below 12 years old have iodine deficiencies, and more than one in three children in the same age bracket suffer from iron deficiency anemia (IDA).

Poor oral hygiene was also at the root of rampant absenteeism as dental caries, or tooth decay, was prevalent in 87 percent of school children.

At least 22 percent of public elementary pupils also had abnormalities in their urine, which the health center said could be signs of urinary tract infections, at least.

With respect to drug use, the center said nearly 10 percent of students in the secondary and tertiary levels had admitted to having used drugs. Most of the high school students who admitted having used drugs said they did so only to experiment.

Santos advised teachers to watch out for signs of drug abuse, alcoholism and ill health, which include redness of the eyes, mental block, stammering, weight loss, unusual behavior such as negative response to schoolwork, absenteeism, and declining grades.

According to Santos, these signs could also point to deeper problems such as depression, involvement in street gangs, and a predisposition to suicide, among others. She stressed there was a need for teachers to undergo adequate training in the effective teaching of proper and positive health practices.

Santos said there was a need to upgrade the skills and the support given to school health and nutrition personnel, nutrition supervisors and administrators to effectively implement school health and nutrition programs.

She encouraged parents to coordinate closely with teachers about the students' health condition that may affect their performance in school.

DSWD reports 155 women, kids trafficking victims

By Cynthia D. Balana

DESPITE THE LAW BANNING THE TRAFFICKing of women and children, the number of victims rescued has reached 155 from January to September this year.

This prompted the Department of Social Welfare and Development to call for more police action to address the problem.

The agency said the victims were being attended to at The Haven and Marillac Hills.

Republic Act No. 9207, or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 makes trafficking an illegal act.

According to the DSWD, victims are usually women and children, between 13 to 30 years old and come from the rural areas. They usually have little or no education, are victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence and have relatives who are in prostitution.

Acting DSWD Secretary Lualhati Pablo said traffickers use any of the following strategies to dupe would be-victims:

- They guarantee to pay for all expenses, waive processing fees and fix all documents.
- They promise parents that the child will work and study, have an easy job, earn more income for the family and get a free mobile phone.
- They give cash advances so parents can pay for their debts.
- They use blackmail or threats.

Pablo said that among the major channels of trafficking were the mail-order-bride and overseas work.

She said that trafficked victims were blindfolded while being transported and kept in padlocked, well-guarded places. They were always escorted and forced to work hard.

They did not eat regularly and their meals were deducted from their salaries. If they worked in clubs, managers usually withheld their earnings or salaries.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 29, 2005
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading:	Is 11:1-10
Gospel:	Luke 10:21-24

Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and made them known to the little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. I have been given all things by my Father, so that no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said to them privately, "Fortunate are you to see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings would have liked to see what you see but did not, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

Commentary

Jesus prays, teaching us. First we are to praise the will of our Father and to remember that all that is given to us comes from God's goodness. And we only know the Father by the kindness and revelation of Jesus and only know Jesus by the Father's disclosure. In our baptisms the Trinity dwells with us and the Spirit teaches us how to pray—in words, beyond words, into the silence of presence, knowledge and obedience. How fortunate we are to know what kings and prophets longed for. Today may we live in gratitude for the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ones seeking to make us one with all people, one with Them.

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Cases of violence vs women down—police

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE CASES OF VIOLENCE against women (VAW) such as wife battery and sexual abuse have decreased in the last three years, according to police statistics.

VAW incidents reported to the police during the first three quarters of 2005 numbered 5,146, lower by 7.6 percent compared to the same period in 2004, and lower by 20.2 percent compared to the same period in 2003.

"There is a need to determine the real causes for this decline. During the last 10 to 12 years, from 1991 to 2003, the number of VAW cases rose," said Supt. Ildebrandi Usana, head of the Philippine National Police-Juvenile and Gender Sensitivity Division.

Usana said the number of abused women could be higher but they were unreported. Studies showed that women preferred to keep quiet about their ordeal because of the humiliation and the belief that this would cause more problems for the family.

The officer listed down three reasons that could explain the recent statistics:

- The passage of Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act last year.
- The aggressive campaign by government and private groups to raise awareness about VAW and to educate women about their rights and what they could do to protect themselves.
- The unwillingness of victims to report their abusive partners because victims don't want their partners to end up in jail.

"Based on our experience, many women just want to give their partners a lesson," Usana said. "This could be why they do not want to report. Remember, the intention of the law is to provide heavier penalties so that VAW does not happen."

Victims also didn't want their partners locked up for a long period because of its possible effects to the family, the children in particular, Usana added.

Police statistics showed that of the 5,146 cases reported during the first nine months of 2005, 35.64 percent involved physical injuries or wife battery and 16.40 percent were cases of rape and attempted rape.

One in every 13 cases involved acts of lasciviousness. Less than one percent accounted for sexual harassment, according to statistics.

There were 5,563 VAW cases reported to the police in 2004 and 6,447 cases in 2003.

Last week, the FJGSD presented a study showing that up to 16 percent of women police officers had been physically abused by their partners at one time or another during the last 10 years.

Veep backs more job fairs

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO has called for the holding of more job fairs to ease the country's unemployment problem, especially since the holidays are coming up.

De Castro said he had asked the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) at Malacañang to expand its job-generation program by holding more job "tiangges" (fairs), especially this Christmas to make more families comfortable.

"Different kinds of *tiangge* are starting to sprout with the onset of the Christmas holidays and the establishment of many *tiangges* for jobs would be timely," De Castro said.

"Besides, jobs would be the best gifts for our millions of countrymen who have waited long enough to be employed," he said.

The PMS had been tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to oversee and coordinate the national road map for jobs generation.

It was also one of the sponsors of the job fair held by the Employers Confederation of Philippines (Ecop) at the Philippine Trade and Training Center in Pasay City last Friday.

A total of 178 private firms participated in the event, offering up some 5,000 jobs.

During the fair, De Castro asked Ecop president Rene Soriano to hold the event twice a year instead of only once to help the government meet its target of generating 1.6 million jobs yearly.

"This kind of activity surely helps our people who are looking for jobs and Ecop can be more helpful by holding it more often," the Vice President told Soriano.

Ombudsman files raps vs exec

THE OMBUDSMAN HAS FILED two criminal cases in the Sandiganbayan against a ranking Misamis Oriental official for failing to liquidate P1.3 million in cash advances.

Charged with failure to render accounts and malversation was Roque D. Barros, Misamis Oriental provincial administrator.

Ombudsman acting Deputy Special Prosecutor Wendell Barreras-Sulit said the money was part of P2.75 million in cash advances given to Barros between November 2001 and June 2003.

Investigation by government auditors showed Barros liquidated only P1.431 million of the total amount leaving a balance of P1,318,188.

The Commission on Audit, in coordination with the Misamis Oriental provincial government, sent Barros a demand letter asking him to account for the balance, but he reportedly failed to respond.

According to the Ombudsman, in this case, the presumption is that Barros "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously malversed and misappropriated the funds" and "converted the same to his personal use and benefit." *Nelson F. Flores*

Too little for health care in DOH budget, says group

From page A1

tavos daily for health care if the proposed P10.58-billion budget for the Department of Health is approved, according to the six-page "Philippine Health Situation" prepared by the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD).

The allocation is way below the World Health Organization (WHO) prescription that countries set aside at least 5 percent of their gross national product (GNP) for health.

The P10.58 billion represents only 0.35 percent of the GNP, slightly up from this year's budget of P10.3 billion (0.21 percent), and P10.4 billion (0.33 percent) last year, according to Dr. Gene Nisperos, HEAD secretary general.

"The measly allocation speaks well of how the government intends to respond to the collapsing public health care system," he told the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday.

The tight budget will be easily felt by 11 government hospitals in Metro Manila, which are to get P2.4 billion, according to Nisperos.

He noted that only P2 million was earmarked to subsidize the expenses of poor patients in "specialty" hospitals.

This means that indigent patients in hospitals, such as the Lung Center of the Philippines and the National Kidney Institute, would have to compete for the paltry amount, said Nisperos, a community doctor from Mindanao.

Disease control

Worst, he said, only around P675 million was set aside for disease prevention and control, of which only P154 million is intended to fight tuberculosis. The documents showed that 75 Filipinos die of tuberculosis daily.

In contrast, Nisperos said the military intelligence fund averaged P1.2 billion yearly.

Two hospitals under the Armed Forces of the Philippines—AFP Medical Center and the Veterans Memorial Medical Center—stood to get P1.3 billion between them, Nisperos said.

"I'm not saying that we should cut the budget of these two hospitals; they need the money, too," he said. "But what's important is to increase the budget for the 11 other government hospitals in Metro Manila."

Referral hospitals

Among the hospitals that would have to make do with the proposed P2.4-billion budget are the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), San Lazaro Hospital, Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center and Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital.

The RITM and San Lazaro have been designated referral hospitals in case a bird flu pandemic hits the country. Jose Reyes is considered the "premier" hospital under the Department of Health while Fabella accommodates poor pregnant women.

Nisperos said the backdrop of a public health care system lacking budgetary support was anything but inviting to doctors and nurses who continue to leave the country.

Between 2000 and 2003, around 50,000 nurses flew abroad, according to the HEAD document.

In 2002 alone, around 3,500 doctors joined the bandwagon to work as nurses in countries like Canada and the United States, it said.

Palace resigned to reenacted budget

By Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG IS RESIGNED TO A REENACTED national budget next year but hopes the government will operate under the 2005 budget for only a short period.

Speaker Jose de Venecia and Rep. Rolando Andaya, chair of the House appropriations committee, had acknowledged that Congress had run out of time to pass the proposed 2006 budget before the end of the year, presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said yesterday.

De Venecia and Andaya had blamed the impeachment proceedings against President Macapagal-Arroyo in August for the delay in the passage of the proposed P1.056-trillion budget for 2006 in the House of Representatives.

Claudio said the salary adjustment for government workers was among the government programs that would be affected by the reenactment of the 2005 budget.

Also to be affected are priority programs on health, education and other social services, according to Claudio.

Senators have lashed out at congressmen for the delay in the approval of the 2006 national budget.

But House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the senators' own legislative performance "leaves much to be desired."

Only for January

Nograles and Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier said senators should not make a big issue out of the budget delay because De Venecia had said the reenacted 2005 budget would be in force only for the first month of 2006.

Senators should realize that more than 300 approved House bills have not been acted upon by the Senate due to its "addiction to investigations, which have yet to produce good legislation," the majority leader said.

"Our advice to senators is do not throw stones when you live in glass houses," he said.

So far, Nograles said, all national laws passed by Congress had originated in the House and the senators "just concurred with their amendments."

Javier, vice chair of the committee on ways and means, said the senators should stop making "a big fuss" over the budget delay since the House had already given its commitment to pass the budget as soon as possible.

"We don't see any reason why some opposition senators are making an issue about this when a reenactment of the budget for at least the first three months of the succeeding year had already happened," Javier said.

He said there was nothing to be alarmed about because government programs for next year would be funded, "including the pork barrel of senators."

The House will finish its budget deliberations before it goes on Christmas recess beginning Dec. 15, according to Andaya.

He said the 2006 General Appropriations Act could be enacted by January. "This is not the end of world. I really don't see why they're making such a fuss," Andaya said.

Even heroes pay bills, say teachers seeking wage hike

From page A1

pupils and students, and sometimes charge exorbitant fees for school projects. But we have no other choice," said Benjo Basas, spokesperson of a group of Metro Manila public school teachers demanding higher wages.

The basic monthly salary of a Teacher 1 is P9,939, but the monthly cost of living for a family of six in Metro Manila is P19,890, he said, citing figures from the National Economic and Development Authority.

"That is a gap of almost P10,000. But where will public school teachers get that amount?" Basas pointed out.

He added that the take-home pay of many teachers was only P3,000, after deductions by loan agencies.

When teachers engage in petty corruption, they find it hard to impart to their students the values that a working-class hero like Andres Bonifacio believed in.

"As public educators, it will be hypocritical of us to teach lessons on Bonifacio yet fail to live up to his ideals," Basas, a teacher at the Baesa High School in Caloocan City, said.

As the country celebrated Bonifacio Day (two days in advance) yesterday, a small group of public school teachers gathered at the Quezon Memorial Circle to join workers in their clamor for a P125 across-the-board wage hike.

Dismal living conditions were driving public school teachers to less than legitimate ways to augment their income, with many even resorting to "subsistence corruption," said Basas.

Representing at least eight public schools in Quezon City, Manila and Caloocan City, the teachers, who also belong to the party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa, will join the working people's march called "Lakbayan para sa Kabuhayan, Karapatan at Kalayaan," beginning today.

They will also hold a demonstration in front of the House of Representatives to call for higher wages, the release of their cost-of-living allowance, full recognition of their rights under the Magna Carta for Teachers and better working conditions.

The Lakbayan, led by the Partido ng Manggagawa, will culminate on Nov. 30. The participants will demand a legislated wage increase, the scrapping of the expanded value-added tax, tax exemption for below-minimum wage earners and the repeal of the oil deregulation law.

Children find 5 grass owl nestlings in Parañaque

From page A1

owlpages.com said.

Grass owls are believed to breed at any time of year if conditions are favorable.

"The young have a first down of white and a second of warm golden brown. Fledging is at about two months. Long before this, the female stops brooding them and they walk away from the nest to hide in the grass, returning at night when the adults bring in food. All young appear to fledge in dark plumage, indistinguishable from adult females," the website said.

Distribution

Grass owls are also found in Sulawesi, Lesser Sundas, possibly Fiji, Taiwan, southern China, Australia, parts of Southeast Asia and India. They also occur discontinuously in New Guinea.

Bernabe has mobilized the city's Task Force Avian Flu members to keep an eye on the bird haven in Barangay La Huerta and prevent the poaching of birds and eggs in the area.

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AFP wraps up wiretap probe sans Garci side

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE ARMED FORCES HAS WRAPPED UP ITS probe into the alleged involvement of some of its top officers in the "Hello Garci" scandal without getting the side of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

The five-member fact-finding board headed by Inspector General Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga turned over its findings to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga last week amid reports that Garcillano had reappeared after hiding for months. *(See story page A1.)*

The board has no intention of reopening its inquiry and asking Garcillano to answer questions, according to AFP spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison.

"We can't compel him to come because we have no jurisdiction over Garcillano," Kison told reporters yesterday.

Mayuga and the other board members must have been aware last week that Garcillano had resurfaced. "But nobody knows his whereabouts," Kison said.

He insisted that Garcillano's return had no implication on the military's investigation.

In a budget hearing last week, Mayuga told senators the board would submit its report on Dec. 15.

The military was dragged into the scandal after Garcillano reportedly mentioned in the alleged wiretaps the name of four officers: Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon; Army 1st Infantry Division chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon; retired Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, and newly retired Philippine Military Academy deputy superintendent Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani.

Gudani is facing court-martial separately for testifying before a Senate investigation on the Garcillano scandal on Sept. 28, against a "gag order" from Ms Arroyo.

"The investigation focused on the alleged participation of some of our generals. This pertains to the [military's] Task Force HOPE (honest, orderly and peaceful elections)," Kison said yesterday.

The release of the report was up to Senga, Kison added.

The Mayuga board interviewed 73 persons, including the four generals, in the course of the closed-door hearings that began on July 26.

Garcillano protected by armed Moro groups

From page A1

Garcillano promised to call back and then disappeared like a puff of smoke, setting loose speculation—backed by a report from the Department of Foreign Affairs—that he had fled abroad.

Last week, as rumors circulated that he had returned, he called simply to say "hello." INQUIRER contacts then helped to arrange the interview.

The final leg of the trip to meet Garcillano started on Sunday when this reporter, aboard a taxi after taking a Philippine Airlines flight to Awang, Maguindanao, was told on the telephone to transfer to a heavily tinted white van parked on the side of a road near the airport.

Men in dark shades

The van held four men who were all wearing tubaos and dark glasses. They were all armed and equipped with the latest communication gadgets like satellite cellular phones and handheld radios.

One of the men blindfolded this reporter.

The ride on a bumpy road took an hour, going through a mountain pass and apparently circling many times for security reasons before coming to a stop on a dirt road at the foot of a mountain.

This reporter was told to transfer again to another van where his blindfold was removed.

With Grace in Tagaytay

And then there Garcillano was, sitting in the van, wearing dark shades and a black cap. Taking them off, he introduced his first cousin, Tomas Garcillano Jr., who had come with him.

In the interview, Garcillano took broadsides at former Sen. Francisco Tatad.

"He's wrong. Why would I go there?" said Garcillano, referring to Tatad's claim last week that he had sneaked into Mindanao from Sabah in Malaysia.

Garcillano also claimed that he was in Tagaytay City when he first contacted the INQUIRER in early July. That was the time that he was joined by his wife Grace, he said.

Newspapers every day

But he and Grace stayed mostly in Sulu, he said.

During the time Garcillano was in hiding, Tomas said he arranged for his cousin to receive Manila newspapers every day.

Garcillano said he also followed the news by listening to the radio, and complained about the fulminations against him by a popular Metro Manila broadcaster.

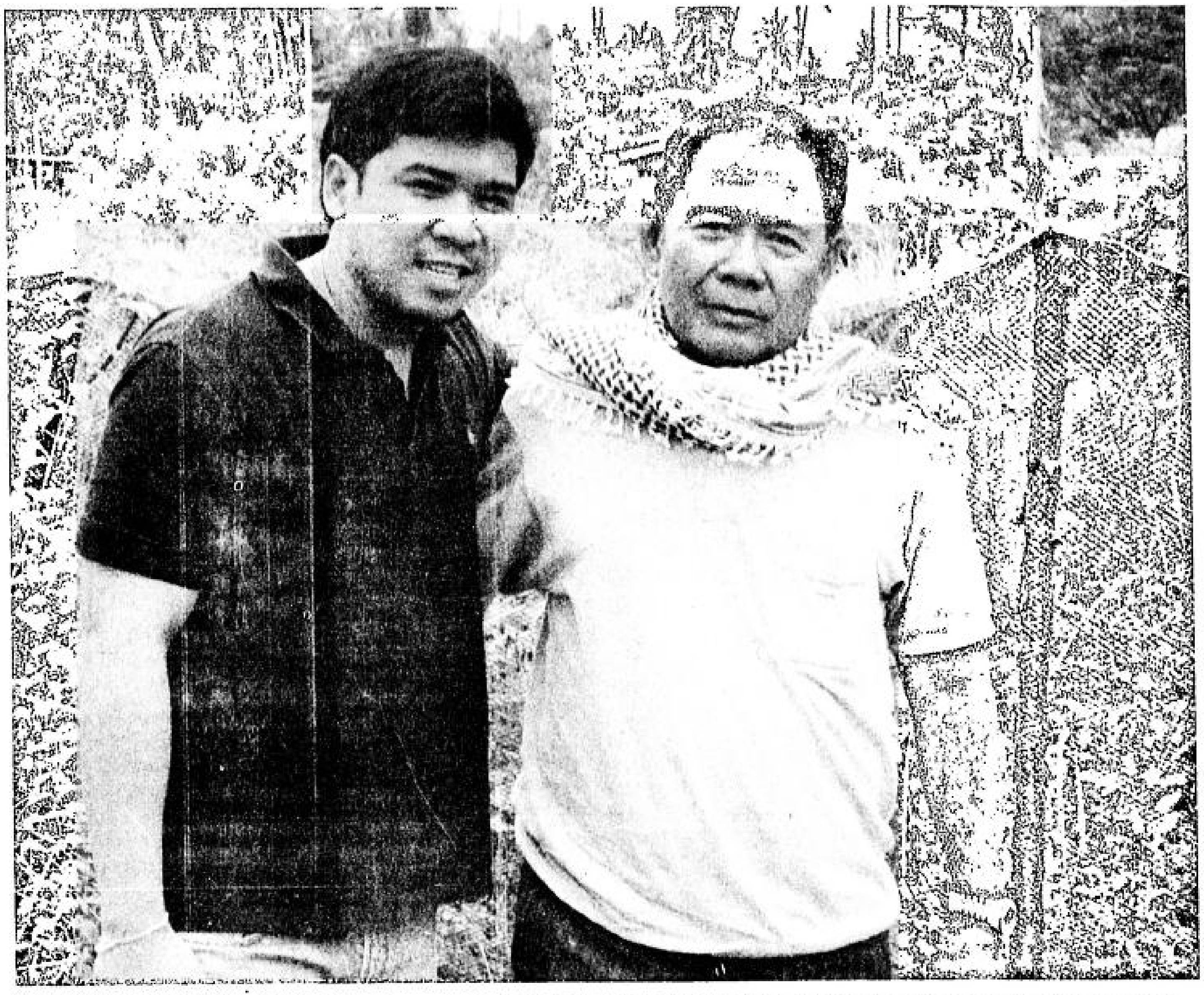
The interview over, Garcillano agreed to pose for the camera outside the van.

So sorry

The trip back to the city was quicker, and the four men were more relaxed and friendly.

As pop music blared from the car stereo, one of the men said: "*Pasensya na* (Sorry for this). We have to do this. We need to. Just contact us if there are any problems."

They dropped this reporter in front of an old Cotabato hotel and then sped away.



"I HAVE BEEN HERE ALL ALONG." That was what elusive former poll commissioner Virgilio Garcillano told INQUIRER reporter Mike Ubac when they met at the foot of a mountain in Mindanao.

Ong dared to produce 'Hello Garci' original tape

From page A1

cillano's latest pronouncements indicated that "he doesn't acknowledge the authenticity or legality of the tapes."

Tapes allegedly spliced

Claudio pointed out that Garcillano, who resurfaced after five months in hiding, said in separate media interviews on Sunday that the tapes had been "spliced and fabricated."

Garcillano, 68, disappeared in June following disclosure of the alleged wiretaps that triggered the worst political crisis in the 4-year-old Arroyo presidency. The opposition said the recordings, purportedly between Garcillano and Ms Arroyo, were evidence that she rigged the balloting.

In a bid to head off demands for her resignation, Ms Arroyo apologized for talking with an election official but denied any wrongdoing. In September, she escaped an impeachment attempt in the House.

In his first media interviews, Garcillano dismissed a report by Singapore to the Department of Foreign Affairs that he had turned up in the city-state on July 14 and had left aboard a British Airways flight for an undisclosed location the next day. He said he never left the Philippines.

He denied conspiring with Ms Arroyo to manipulate the balloting and said he was willing to testify as soon as the House lifted a warrant for his arrest issued after he failed to appear before a joint inquiry into the wiretapping.

He's 'obviously a liar'

Asked about the demand, Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. of Makati City said: "I don't think we should waste our time arguing with this fellow who is obviously a liar."

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said that in the light of Garcillano's statement, "it's about time all future investigations, if there would be any, focused on the authenticity of the tapes. It's something basic that the House inquiry failed to [accomplish]," Defensor told the INQUIRER.

In August, Defensor presented to reporters a supposed analysis by US forensic expert Barry Dickey that purportedly showed the "Hello Garci" tracks had been digitally altered. He said he volunteered this information to the House panel but he was ignored.

"Garcillano would be a credible witness in terms of revealing who else called him up. Also, I'd like to know the oppositionists who called him up during the elections," said Defensor, who is also an Arroyo spokesperson.

Black book

Garcillano told the INQUIRER that he would name all the politicians who called him up in connection with the elections regardless of who got hurt. In his latest interview, he told GMA television yesterday that he had a "black book" containing the names of the politicians who called him during the elections.

Representatives Eduardo Zialcita (Lakas, Parañaque) and Benasing Macarambon (NPC, Lanao del Sur), both members of the House inquiry panel into the "Hello Garci" tapes, said Ong had no reason to continue hiding and evading the House investigation.

Zialcita said Ong's continued hiding negated his previous declaration that he was ready to face any investigation and would be "prepared to face death and sacrifice."

"Ong should satisfy the public's desire to hear and know the contents of his mother of all tapes. It's time we listened to his tape and learned the circumstances behind its production," Zialcita said.

Macarambon, vice chair of the committee on national defense, said that if Ong wanted to, he could appear side by side with Garcillano to validate his tape.

"Until Ong appears, the question remains what are the contents of his mother of all tapes. Is it true that this is about election fraud?" he said.

House to resume probe

"The opposition has withdrawn the P1-million bounty. If the warrant will also be withdrawn and his security assured, Garcillano will have no reason not to attend the House inquiry," said Rep. Marcelino Libanan (Lakas, Eastern Samar).

Speaker Jose de Venecia said he would meet with the five committee chairs today to discuss the resumption of their joint investigation after Garcillano's decision to testify.

The committee heads had drafted a report that concluded Malacañang attempted to cover up the revelations Ms Arroyo had rigged the balloting, but Arroyo allies in the panels disagreed with the finding and demanded that it reflect that the wiretaps were part of an attempt to unseat her.

A deadlock in the discussions ensued and no final report has been issued.

Garcillano's claim that he never left the country raised eyebrows in the Department of Justice and Department of Foreign Affairs and among opposition lawmakers.

"That is something that has to be explained because there is a certification from Singapore that [Garcillano] was there and then he immediately left Singapore on board a British Airways flight," said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

"That evidence is really hard to disprove," said Gonzalez of the diplomatic note of Singapore to the DFA certifying that Garcillano had flown to the city-state en route to a third country.

"It's the word of Garcillano against the word of Singapore," said Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin.

Singapore more credible

Senate President Franklin Drilon said, "I would rather give much value to the statement of the Singapore government, given as it was in response to official queries from the Philippine government, and therefore this must be accorded the highest credibility."

Drilon said he and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee investigating the wiretaps, had decided to summon Garcillano to appear at a hearing on Dec. 8 "so that he can be placed under oath and subjected to searching questions in order that we can get to the bottom of this."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the Senate would be a better venue to investigate Garcillano.

"The majority of the congressmen will be very kind to him, but in the Senate, more than at any other time, I think the Senate now is more solid than before in ferreting out the truth about not only the Garci controversy but other controversies," Lacson said.

Biazon said he was also issuing summons to Ong and TSgt. Vidal Doble of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Ong allegedly paid Doble P2 million for what he claimed were the original wiretaps. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Luige A. del Puerto, Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christian V. Esguerra and Volt Contreras, and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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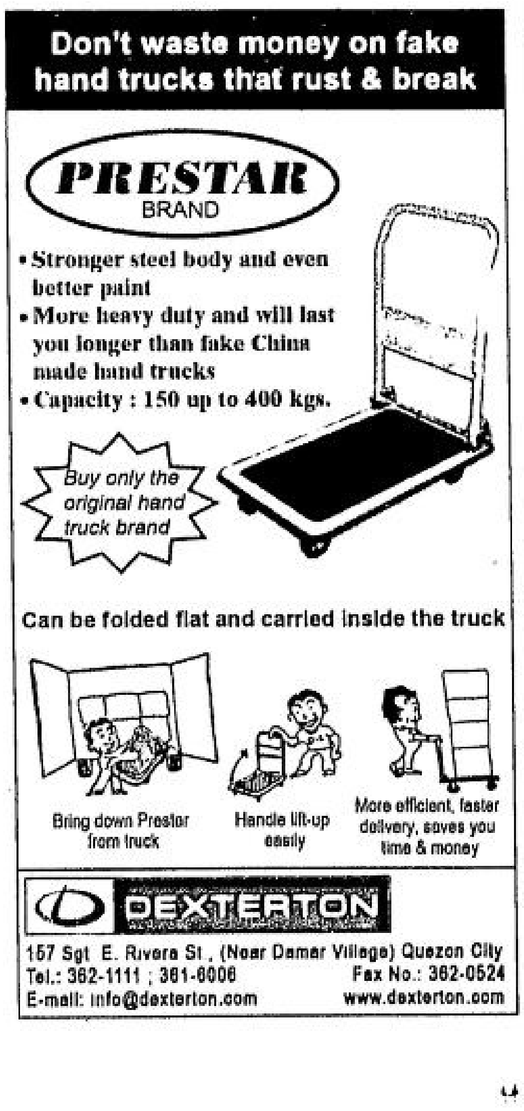

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Vatican keeping tabs on Philippine politics

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE VATICAN IS KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH on the political turmoil besetting its biggest Catholic flock in Asia.

Cardinal Crescenzio Sepe, the Holy See's Prefect for the Congregation for Evangelization, inquired about the Philippine political situation during his meeting with Asian cardinals and bishops at the Vatican more than a week ago.

Surprisingly, the outspoken Archbishop Oscar Cruz, who represents the country in the annual gathering, said he replied with circumspection for fear that "I might not say the right things."

Cruz said he was asked what he thought of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo which has been shaken by allegations of vote-rigging.

"I said there was no big secret," he recalled. "I said (my views) might not be the standard as far as the perception of the government is concerned."

It's no secret that the Lingayen-Dagupan prelate has been critical of Ms Arroyo for allegedly using "jueteng" money to help ensure her victory in the 2004 elections and had joined the call for her to step down.

Cruz said Cardinal Sepe went on to ask about the Catholic Church in the Philippines. He said he replied by saying that "the people are still looking for guidance from the bishops, especially from the CBCP (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines)."

"I said that last July was monumental because of the socio-political problem we were having here and people were waiting for an advisory from the CBCP", Cruz recounted telling the prelates. "I told them the truth that our advisory came in (the form of) a pure statement that was interpreted well by those who seemed to have been favored by it and was interpreted ill by those disfavored by it."

Cruz was referring to the July pastoral statement in which the CBCP refused to join the clamor for Ms Arroyo's resignation. The move was believed to have eased the tension and helped Ms Arroyo keep her position.

The day before the statement was released, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco met with the bishops at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila and reportedly cautioned the bishops against meddling in politics.

Unknown to many, at least three bishops had also been summoned to Malacañang for dinner with the President the night before, the INQUIRER has learned.

Among them were Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Archbishop Fernando Capalla, immediate past president of the CBCP, according to three Church insiders. Capalla earlier admitted to the INQUIRER that there was such a dinner but denied he was present.

One priest questioned the propriety of acceding to the Palace's dinner invitation.

"What were they thinking? That the President merely wanted a companion that night?" said the priest, who asked not to be identified for fear of his bishop's wrath. "The bishops were about to make a very important decision involving the President and here she was treating them to dinner."

In his meeting with Cardinal Sepe, Cruz said that the local Catholic hierarchy "has become more careful in talking about the socio-moral dimension of politics because it is suspected to be involving itself in political matters."

2 RP sailors airlifted from Moby Dick

ATHENS, GREECE—The crew of a Honduras-flagged cargo ship was airlifted to safety Sunday after being stranded near the southeastern Aegean island of Tilos, authorities said.

The five crew members of the Moby Dick—two Germans, two Filipinos and one Pole—were taken by helicopter to the nearby island of Rhodes, the merchant marine ministry said.

The Moby Dick, which was carrying construction material from the Black Sea port of Odessa to Beirut, in Lebanon, sent out an emergency signal after it began to take on water, 25 nautical miles west of Tilos. Weather conditions in the area were reported to be good. Other details were not immediately available. *AP*

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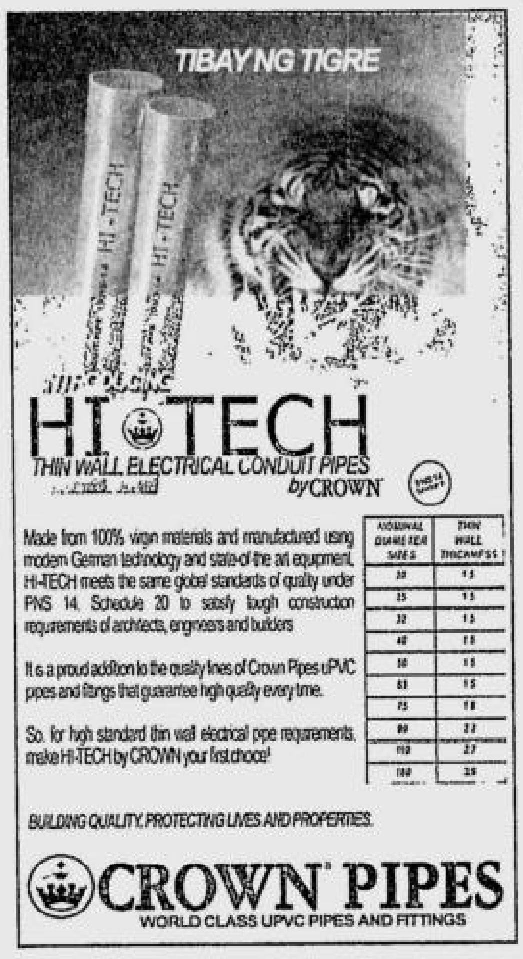

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

UN: AIDS epidemic looms in Indonesia

JAKARTA—INDONESIA, THE WORLD'S FOURTH most populous country, is on the brink of an AIDS epidemic and must act quickly to fight its spread, UNAIDS chief Peter Piot said Monday as he began a four-day visit here.

Piot, who will spend World AIDS day here on Thursday, said that Indonesia needed every layer of society to join the battle against HIV, the virus causing AIDS, as it was now the "new frontline of the AIDS epidemic."

"When I look at Indonesia from the perspective globally I would say that there's no doubt that Indonesia is in the early stages of an AIDS epidemic," he told a press briefing after meeting with coordinating minister for social welfare, Alwi Shihab.

Indonesia estimates it has 90,000 to 130,000 people infected with HIV.

But other statistics show at least 600,000 intravenous drug users are in the sprawling archipelago country, with around half believed to be infected, the minister said.

Piot said that besides drug users, sex workers and their clients were clocking in "alarmingly high and increasing" infection rates, while in the eastern province of Papua, the virus was spreading speedily through the heterosexual population.

"We have these three different epidemics going on and we know from experience that once it starts like that it's only a matter of time before HIV spreads outside these fairly defined populations," he said.

He said that while President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono made his commitment to fighting AIDS clear, "we need that same level of commitment of all levels of society ... We know from experience that's how you make progress in AIDS."

The promotion of condom use in Indonesia, a Muslim nation, is extremely sensitive but Shihab said that his ministry was talking to religious leaders to emphasize the disastrous consequences of not doing so.

"We are giving the other perspective of religious understanding," he said, noting that under Islamic law it was also necessary to prevent death, and that maintaining life was the responsibility of all individual Muslims.

Piot said he chose to spend World AIDS day in Asia because he wanted to see attention focused on the region, where 10 years ago one person in 10 infected globally was from here. Now one in five new infections are in Asia.

"I wanted to highlight the situation in Asia, the fact that the epidemic is entering its globalization phase and that I think it's at high risk," he said.

He picked Ind onesia in particular because the country "is the new frontline of the AIDS epidemic ... all the elements are here for a rapid spread of HIV so it's to express concern, to highlight the opportunities that are there.

"The opportunities are enormous to really stop the epidemic, to nip it in the bud."

Access to drugs is another challenge in Indonesia. Last year, the government pledged to increase its spending on subsidizing drugs for HIV/AIDS patients here to 24 billion rupiah ($2.49 million), up from 10 billion rupiah the previous year. *AFP*

Meet seeks to ease global warming dispute

MONTREAL, CANADA—A UN CONFERENCE opening in Canada on Monday will try to step up a fight against global warming by drawing the United States and developing nations into UN-led agreements beyond 2012.

About 10,000 delegates—from 189 governments, environmental lobby groups and businesses—will attend the Nov. 28-Dec. 9 talks meant to start mapping out what to do after the first period of the UN's Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012.

"We have no choice" but to act, Canada's Environment Minister Stephane Dion said of the fight to curb a human-induced warming that may spur more hurricanes, floods, droughts and drive up sea levels by almost a meter (3 feet) by 2100.

Climate change "is the worst threat the world is facing from an environmental perspective ... It's putting at risk our relationship with the planet," he said on the eve of the talks.

But the world is deeply split over what to do.

The United States, the world's biggest polluter, and Australia have rejected Kyoto, under which 40 industrialized nations have agreed to cut their emissions of heat-trapping gases by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12.

President George W. Bush has said Kyoto would eliminate US jobs and wrongly excludes developing nations. He is focusing on new technology, rather than Kyoto-style caps.

But many nations and environmentalists say tougher action is needed, including a start to talks on involving developing nations such as China and India in limiting the growth of their emissions.

The 10 hottest years since records began in the 1860s have come since 1990 and most scientists blame rising temperatures on a build-up of greenhouse gases from carbon dioxide released by burning fossil fuels in power plants, factories and cars.

"We think we should have agreement on what comes after Kyoto by 2008," said Jennifer Morgan, climate policy expert at the WWF environment group. *Reuters*

Burma extends Suu Kyi's house arrest by 6 months

RANGOON—BURMA'S JUNTA HAS extended prodemocracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest by six months, an official said Monday, raising hopes in her party that the Nobel peace laureate could be freed sooner than expected.

A spokesperson for her National League for Democracy (NLD) also said the shorter-than-expected extension appeared to coincide with the military's timetable for completing talks on a new constitution, set to resume next week.

"She was officially informed on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 27" of the six-month extension, the government official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official could not explain why the latest extension was for only six months, or provide any details about the make up of the delegation that delivered the notice. *AFP*

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Muslims slam call for more Hindu kids

NEW DELHI—A LEADING HINDU HARDLINER has angered women and Muslims by pressing Hindus to have as many children as they can to avoid being swamped by Muslims.

K.S. Sudarshan, who heads the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party which led India until last year, said a higher Hindu birth rate was vital to check a "population imbalance."

"Whenever new people come to me for blessings, I tell them: 'Not less than three (children)'. The more you can, the better," he said at a function broadcast on television recently.

Women's groups in Asia's third-largest economy, with a billion-plus people, said they were insulted and one group labeled the Sudarshan's stand an "agenda of hatred."

"It is implied in his statement that a woman's reproductive faculties are to be employed solely to fulfil the agenda of a Hindu nationalist state—like a reproductive machine," said Malini Bhattacharya, a leading activist.

"As if the question of a woman's right does not even arise—her right over her own body and health."

The RSS holds considerable sway among the large, conservative Hindu population, especially in impoverished northern India.

It has often expressed concern about what it calls a higher growth rate among Muslims, especially in areas bordering Nepal and Bangladesh where India says illegal immigrants, mainly Muslims, infiltrate into the country. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

4 Westerners kidnapped in Iraq

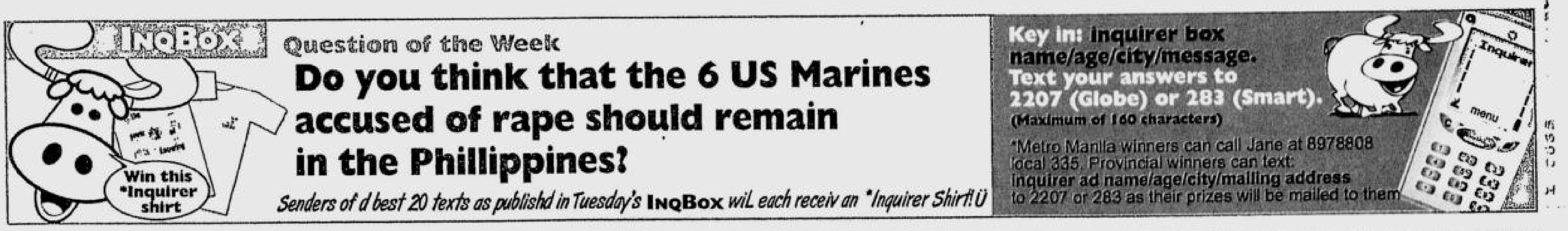
MONTREAL—Four aid workers—two Canadians, one Briton and one American—have been kidnapped in Iraq, a Canadian foreign ministry official said Sunday. Dan McTeague, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadians Abroad, declined to reveal the identity of the two Canadians so as not to compromise their safety, while confirming the nationalities of all four missing aid workers. In Washington, a State Department spokesperson declined to confirm the report of the missing American, saying only that US officials in Baghdad were investigating the report. *AFP*

Russia waits for toxic slick

BEIJING—The taps were back on in China's Harbin city on Monday but the toxic slick flowing down the Songhua river was still raising environmental concerns for smaller cities, and all the way to Russia. Water supplies to many of Harbin's 3.8 million urban residents were restored at 6 p.m. on Sunday, five days after they were cut off due to an 80-km slick of benzene on the Songhua. However, the 100 tons of benzene and nitrobenzene that were dumped into the Songhua on Nov. 13 following a chemical plant explosion in neighboring Jilin province were still posing a danger for many others downstream. The slick is expected to reach the Russian border, which is about 600 km from Harbin, in two weeks, state press reported Monday. *AFP*

EU accepts Iran call for fresh talks

TEHRAN/BARCELONA—Britain, France and Germany agreed on Sunday to exploratory talks with Iran on resuming negotiations over its disputed nuclear program, which broke down in August, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said. "A letter has been conveyed to Iran this afternoon ... from the three countries and myself. We offered Iran to have conversations, dialogue to see if we have enough common basis to start negotiations," he told reporters at a Euro-Mediterranean summit in Barcelona. An EU diplomat said the letter called Iran's resumption of uranium ore conversion a "major setback" but dropped the previous European insistence that negotiations on long-term cooperation could only restart if Iran resumed a full suspension of activities related to uranium enrichment. *Reuters*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Samsung heiress commits suicide

SEOUL—LEE YOON-HYUNG, AN HEIRESS TO the wealthy family that controls South Korea's Samsung Group, has committed suicide at the age of 26, a company official said on Monday.

Last week, newspapers ran front-page articles saying Lee, the youngest daughter of Samsung Group chair Lee Kun-hee, died in a traffic accident in New York, where she was attending graduate school.

But on Monday papers reported Lee had hanged herself with an electrical cord at her New York apartment, citing local police and medical examiners' reports.

The heiress once enjoyed popularity in South Korea when she started a personal website called "Pretty Yoon-hyung" that described what is was like to be a daughter in a family that ran the country's top conglomerate.

Lee shared her father's passion for fast cars and was working to increase her knowledge of art in order to help run Samsung's cultural foundation, local media reported.

But newspapers speculated Lee, a graduate student at New York University, may have been suffering from depression.

Lee had shares in company affiliates worth about 179 billion won ($171.9 million), according to Medias Equitables, an Internet site that provides information on individual shareholders.

The suicide comes at a difficult time for the family of the Samsung Group, which had combined sales of 135.5 trillion won in 2004, equivalent to more than one-sixth of South Korea's annual gross domestic product. *Reuters*

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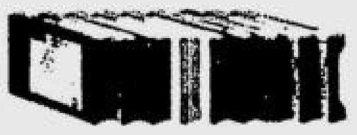

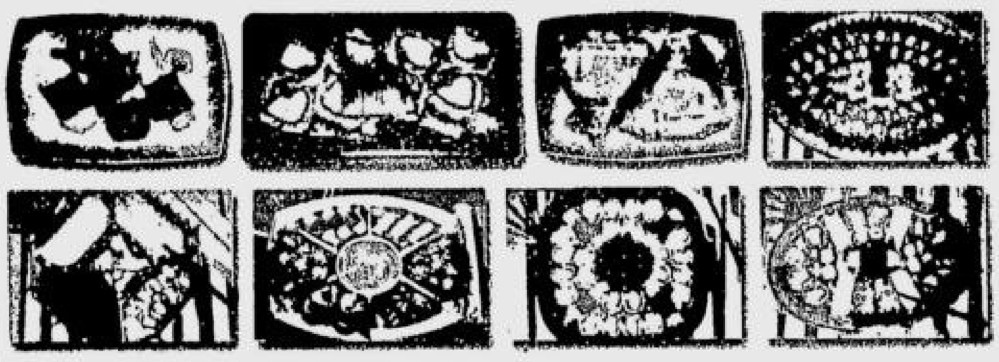

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OPINION

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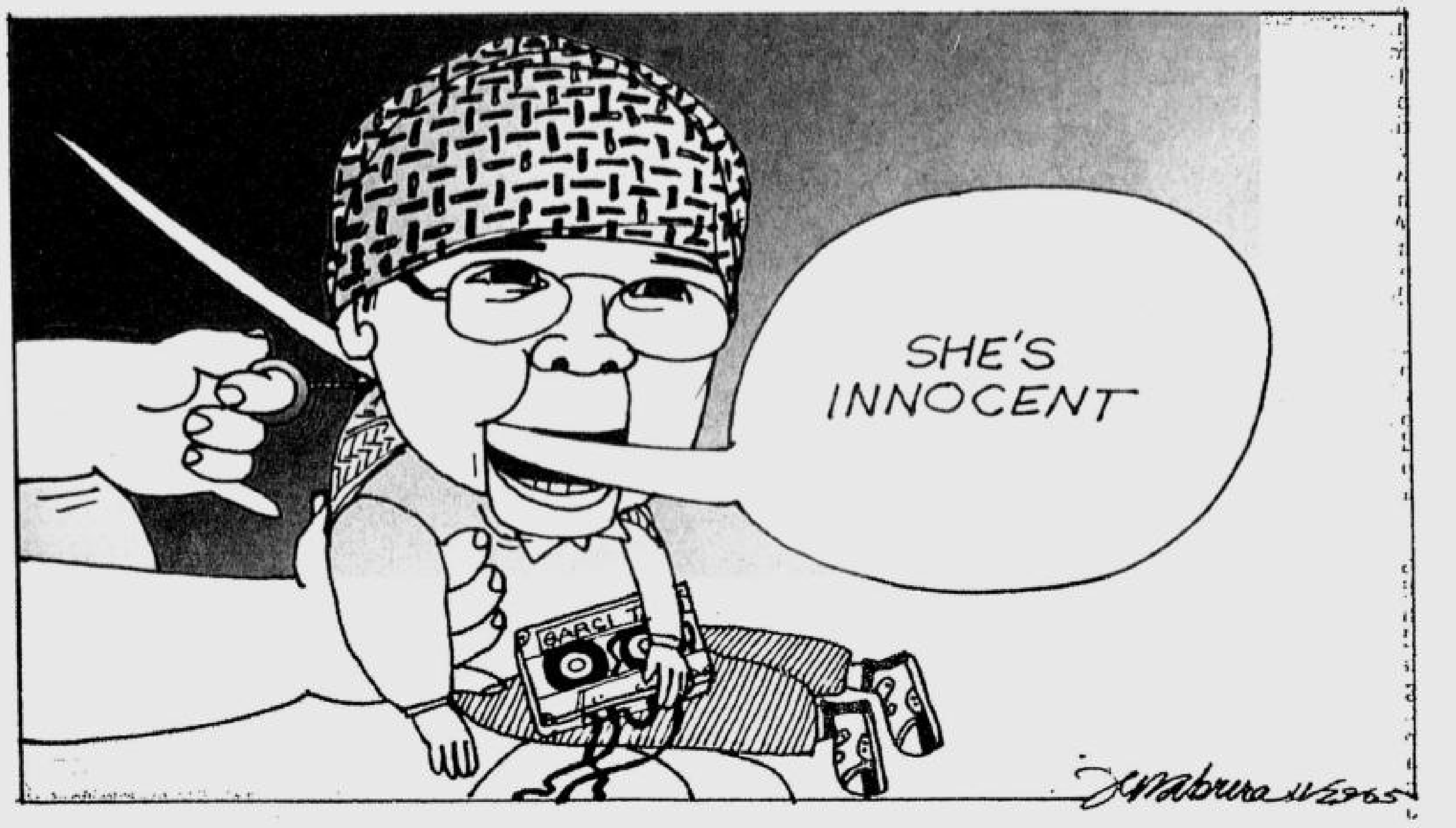

EDITORIALS

Will Garci talk?

FINALLY, FORMER ELECTION COMMISSIONER VIRgilio Garcillano has surfaced and has expressed his willingness to talk about his telephone conversations with President Macapagal-Arroyo. Will the people finally be able to know the truth about the controversial "Hello Garci" tapes and the allegation that the President rigged the May 2005 presidential election?

Yes, Garcillano is here, but getting him to testify and ascertaining the truth about the alleged rigging of the election results may not be as easy as it seems. It appears that even with the surfacing of the most important witness, the nation is still far from achieving closure to the case.

Garcillano asked the House of Representatives to lift the P1-million bounty on him, and the chamber has done so. Now, he is contesting the warrant of arrest issued by the House after he failed to attend the hearings to which he had been summoned. Garcillano said that if the Supreme Court would uphold the legality of the warrant of arrest he was willing to face the inquiry. But the Supreme Court, invoking the principle of separation of powers, may refuse to rule on the issue. In that event, the House will have to enforce its warrant and bodily bring Garcillano before the committees looking into the election case. Then we cannot predict how Garcillano will react. He has said before that he did not want to go through the indignity of an arrest.

Then there is the matter of the controversial "Hello Garci" tape. He has said that before he could be asked about the supposed taped conversations, "they have to show us that there was such an original [master] tape, if such [a tape] indeed existed." He alleged that the tape was spliced, tampered with, edited or corrected.

So many versions of the "tape" have been presented and we do not know which is the original, "authoritative" one. One of these tapes will have to be authenticated and agreed upon as the tape that will be used in the questioning of Garcillano. But then even the "authenticated" tape, if all parties can agree on it, may not be used in the hearing. The administration (Garcillano can be expected to take the same stand) has always contended that the tape may not be used as evidence because wiretapping is illegal. Garcillano's counsel has asked the Supreme Court to stop the House committees from making use of the wiretapped conversations in their report. He is likely to raise the same during the House hearings, if ever they are held.

We believe that everybody—except those who would want damaging things to be forever hidden—wants the House hearings to be held as soon as possible so that the truth may be known and closure can be brought to a case that has caused a lot of political and economic instability. But while the principal witness has surfaced and declared his willingness to testify (under certain conditions), getting the hearings started may not be easy.

Model official

OUTSIDE HIS CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AND THE BUreau of Customs, Aaron Cepeding Redubla was not very well known. In fact, praise and commendation for Redubla came only after his death.

What made his story unusual was that he was widely recognized as an honest official in a government agency that is widely perceived as one of the most corrupt in the country. Although he was in a position to do so, Redubla did not enrich himself in office. He and his family were content to live on his meager salary. And he worked hard and put in long hours at the office.

Now to preserve Redubla's legacy, former Customs Commissioners Willie Parayno and Alberto Lina and Melita Belicena of the Societé Generale de Surveillance are putting up a foundation to honor honest civil servants. Redubla himself recognized that many other government employees have remained uncorrupted in the midst of so much corruption. He once said that "maybe, they should also conduct a lifestyle check on the unexplained poverty of the majority of government employees."

In a nation that is in search of heroes, government employees particularly should look up to Redubla as an icon and a model to emulate.

'Chartered libertines'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"BETTER TO APPEAR IN HELL THAN IN YOUR newspapers."—A Spanish saying.

The tempest that President Macapagal-Arroyo set off with her blunt criticisms of press performance, and equally blunt responses, has simmered down. But the tensions remain. So do the hard questions on how we do our jobs.

"The press is free like the air, a chartered libertine," snapped William Pitt (1759-1806). A prime minister twice over, Pitt smarted from newspaper criticism. In today's English, Pitt's description translates into constitutionally protected prostitute.

So, Ms Arroyo isn't the first to whack media for our perceived and all-too-real flaws. Ferdinand Marcos earlier padlocked the press for "abuses." That included reporting on his regime's kleptocracy.

Dictatorship taught other lessons. In Cornell University's book "Marcos and Martial Law," David Rosenberg writes: "Whenever freedom of the press has been permitted, Filipinos defended it with passion. Whenever it was prohibited, they complied with government regulation with obsequiousness."

Today, some boil down the scuffle into a question of pro or anti-GMA journalists. That's naïve simplification. More is at stake than transient power holders, in Malacañang or elsewhere. It also misreads what the Founding Fathers intended when they welded, into the Constitution, safeguards against castrating liberty of expression.

Democracies check government power by countervailing institutions like the courts and the press. The 1987 Constitution retains press freedom provisions, given our scars from one-man rule. "Once burnt, twice shy."

This is a country where "the powerful extract what they want and the poor grant what they must." The rip-off in Samar's forests and mines are the latest examples. In a society of skewed privilege, the need for watchdogs is crucial.

But what if the sentinels don't growl? That'd fail to uphold unchanging values: truth, accuracy, fairness, context, a sense of the ethical, less of arrogance, plus depth. These create an atmosphere of relevant reporting from a plurality of voices.

"At its best, the press is a servant and guardian of institutions," American columnist Walter Lippman observed. "At its worst, it is a means by which a few exploit social disorganization to its own ends."

The most relevant censure today comes not from Malacañang or politicians but from colleagues. They skewer our flaws—from superficiality, right of reply denial, lack of context to ATM journalism ("Key in my ATM number, and I'll warble your tune").

"Many of you haven't even read the Constitution," the late Haydee Yorac told journalists at a World Press Freedom Day seminar: "Yet, you pontificate on constitutional issues."

Indeed, "shallowness is a silent rot," Cebu Daily News asserts. "It corrodes the soul of our craft. Press freedom can be killed by a thousand cuts of tawdry sloppiness."

INQUIRER columnist and TV commentator Solita Monsod has rapped reporting on election issues marred by patchy research and lack of context. This vacuum allows partisans to spread-eagle into airtime and news pages.

This frenzy is "fed by media more often than I'm comfortable with" Monsod wrote. The press seems unable to "distinguish news and generating it… At most, only feeble attempts to bring balance were attempted… I want no part of what has to be called the lynch-mob mentality."

It's not enough to parrot facts. Today, we must identify consequences, try to discern what lies over the horizon—and for Pete's sake, lower our voices. Too many journalists, George Bernard Shaw once said, are "unable to distinguish the collapse of civilization and a bicycle accident."

And how many were knifed in the back by leaks funneled through reporters willing to peg their stories on anonymous sources?

A New York Times guideline, until June 2004, stipulated that no item from nameless sources would see print unless one editor knew the source's name. That rule has been tightened further: The Times now informs readers why the paper believes the source's name should be withheld. The use of faceless—and unaccountable—sources is the exception.

The press refers to local communists as "leftists," "activists" or "militants," columnist Antonio Abaya notes. "Why, is being a communist a crime or a social disease?" The correct label is communist, he point out. Is this gingerly tip-toeing due to naiveté, ignorance or misplaced values?

Professional detachment is a must for this craft. The British Broadcasting Corp.'s board of governors this month reprimanded its correspondent for saying on air that "she wept" when Yasser Arafat left. The press' allegiance is not to transitory leaders but to a quest for truth that restarts after every deadline.

Then, we have a unique Philippine creation: radio block-timers. They're walk-in customers. In any of 952 radio stations nationwide, they can buy airtime. With no questions asked, they broadcast—what? News and commentary, they claim. Character assassination or praise for a price, critics say. Broadcasters accounted for 21 of 25 assassination victims tallied by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility.

"Are block-timers journalists?" asked the Sun Star. "And if people who have, at best, a hazy claim to being journalists court murder, what are the implications for a craft so essential for democracy at the edges?"

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Addled

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I FIRST HEARD IT SOME MONTHS AGO FROM a taxi driver. I was on my way to the airport in the wee hours of morning, and the driver was in talkative mode (is there a taxi driver that isn't?). It was shortly after GMA had apologized for her "lapse in judgment" and Cory et al. asked her to resign.

Frankly, the driver said, he couldn't understand what the fuss was all about. Sure, he said, GMA had cheated, but everyone does. If the rival candidates were in GMA's shoes, they would probably have done exactly the same thing, which was to call up Garci, though they might have been more careful not to get caught. Where was the point in replacing her? You take her out, you get pretty much the same thing, or worse. *"Pare-pareho lang naman sila* (They're all the same)." Whoever got to rule wasn't going to change his life.

It was as profoundly cynical a statement as I had heard in years, particularly when put as bluntly as that, but it also had the virtue of at least in part being profoundly true. I did not bother to ask him if he thought FPJ or Raul Roco or Eddie Villanueva would have done the same thing if they had been in GMA's shoes, or indeed if they were the same thing. The fellow was absolute in his convictions, and it does not pay to debate with a taxi driver at those hours as they drive even faster when they get animated.

But there you find the secret of GMA's survival. It consists of two things: one, the belief, or suspicion, that the people opposed to GMA are just as godless and deceitful, and, two, that whoever replaces GMA will not be any better—he or she might even be worse.

GMA's tack over the last few months has simply been to harp on those points. It is not that she is better than her enemies, it is that her enemies are no better than she.

Virgilio Garcillano's impending revelation that the opposition called him up too to ask for favors is another step in that direction. Norberto Gonzales already prepared us for that argument when he said a couple of weeks ago: "Frankly speaking, what are we complaining about? All the politicians are behaving like, you know, the only mistake of the President probably is she was caught on tape of a particular conversation… The tapes to me are insignificant. What has happened to the President is a reflection of how rotten our political system has become… Condemning the President by making her resign will not correct the damage that we have inflicted on ourselves."

To be sure, GMA did not invent the tack of citing the atrocities wreaked by others to justify one's own. That was a favorite national pastime well before Edsa II shoved her to power. I recall that only a couple of years ago, Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia's former classmates in the Philippine Military Academy were asking why he should be fired and prosecuted for corruption when clearly his boss in Malacañang and her spouse were far more venal than he. Their argument was: If GMA and Pidal were crooks too, or worse, then Garcia should be set free. It did not occur to them to say that if GMA and Pidal were crooks, too, or worse, then by all means let them be prosecuted as well. And jailed, or lined up against the wall.

Pointing to others as having committed the same crime has become a national pastime because in this country it has come to carry with it that strange conclusion. If two people committed the same crime, then they do not become commonly guilty, they become commonly innocent.

GMA did not invent this, but she did invent something new. Which is that if two (or more) people can show themselves to have committed the same crime, then they are not just commonly innocent, they are commonly victims. They are victims of society. The ultimate oppressor, the one that has victimized them by creating the culture that has turned them the way they are, is—the public itself!

That in fact was the very argument GMA proposed in her State of the Nation Address, which Gonzales was merely repeating: The political culture of this country, which the public is responsible for, has gotten so rotten it is victimizing people like herself, who are forced to commit lapses in judgment. The conclusion was left to Gonzales to make explicitly: Making GMA resign "will not correct the damage we have inflicted on ourselves."

In fact, that is one more compelling reason to get rid of GMA. Because she is addling the brains of her countrymen so much that they are not only being persuaded to feel hopeless, they are being asked to feel guilty. I did mean it when I said some months ago that the way things were going, we were bound to end up apologizing to GMA. Garci now insists he, too, is the victim and not the oppressor for having had his conversations during the elections taped.

We're not just being persuaded to lower standards, finding nothing wrong in lying, cheating and stealing anymore, we're being persuaded to debase thought, finding nothing wrong in the most crooked and perverse logic anymore. We're not just being made to feel cynical and hopeless, finding all our leaders commonly capable only of the worst motives and conduct and who will lead us nowhere, we are being made to feel deserving of tyranny and oppression, having created those leaders the way Frankenstein created his monster, with our own hands.

In fact the solution is simple. I say again, as I said when Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales proposed some months ago that removing GMA will not solve all our problems: It won't, but it sure as hell will solve a great many of them. Not the least, it will stop our precipitous fall into these levels of idiocy. There is only one sense in which it is true that we are ultimately responsible for bringing all this rottenness upon ourselves:

We're still tolerating her.

Opposition afraid of Garci?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE 23RD SEA GAMES OPENED OFFICIALLY last Sunday afternoon in splendid colorful ceremonies led by President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Luneta, marked by pomp and pageantry, lots of fireworks, and arching music by the San Miguel Orchestra. Interestingly, just a few weeks ago Games officials were still scrounging around for sponsorships to fund the huge undertaking. There seemed little interest in a country still preoccupied with a number of scandals, including those around the national sport, basketball. But when the Games finally opened, everything went beautifully, without a hitch, as though we had been preparing and rehearsing for months. What's more, our athletes bagged several gold medals right off from the 41 sports and 295 events at stake, making Filipinos ecstatic where they seemed indifferent weeks before.

One can only say that if only we Pinoys and our country could be more focused, united and disciplined, and less fractious, frivolous and dissipated, what can we not do? But we cannot always bank on luck in the last two minutes in everything we do. We have to give up our *bahala na* attitude and plan, focus, unite and be disciplined, in order to be a great people.

* * *

With the withdrawal of Justices Angelina Gutierrez and Consuelo Santiago and the rejection of the late nomination of Sen. Miriam Santiago, only three candidates remain for the post that will soon be vacated by Chief Justice Hilario Davide. They are Justices Artemio Panganiban, Reynato Puno and Leonardo Quisumbing. Earlier, I said the contest has narrowed down to Panganiban and Puno and that a compromise to give the first crack to the former, who is older, was being proposed by some quarters. After all, Puno can still have 3 1/2 years if he should succeed Panganiban. I was reporting what was being said in legal circles. (How the lawyers are watching the SC developments!) Some backers of Puno, however, perhaps without his knowledge, have given this proposal a rather evil connotation, saying that the office should not be the subject of "political accommodation." They also launched a self-righteous attack about alleged horse-trading and a low regard for Davide.

* * *

These accusations, however, are all a figment of the imagination. I like to believe that the post, being the highest non-political office in the country, should be spared from the usual muck-raking and black propaganda. Those who engage in such sly, underhanded and misleading tactics could reap the whirlwind. The alleged "political accommodation" would be a valid issue if a candidate is truly deficient in merit and qualifications. But this does not seem to be the case with Panganiban who, in addition to his prodigious output of landmark legal ponencias, has exhibited an administrative ability that would be needed to pursue the reforms in the judicial system began by Davide.

* * *

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles has noted that for five months the opposition capitalized on what was termed the "flight" of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to fan the perception of guilt on the part of the Arroyo administration. Garci became the most maligned person in the country, with a warrant of arrest over his head because of his decision to snub the House wiretapping hearings. Now he has suddenly surfaced and one would think that the opposition would be ecstatic, as they can now nail down GMA on charges of cheating, lying and stealing the elections. But Nograles asks why the opposition does not seem happy and are already claiming Garcillano would lie. Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano already calls Garci's impending testimony the "mother of all telenovela productions." Nograles says the House should hear what Garci has to say, so that he could publicly answer all accusations against him. He should now name names. Nograles says the opposition will have first crack at interrogating Garci.

* * *

I totally agree: let Garci tell his story and defend himself. People, trying to understand why the opposition is now attempting to destroy his impending testimony, surmise that it's because it's afraid that a lot of its stalwarts would be implicated if all the tapes are heard. There are rumors that among those who were heard talking to Garci in the tapes were a ranking Senate official who is batting for a fellow senator, and a persistent lady candidate whom Garci addressed as "Beauty," who called him no less than 20 times.

* * *

I asked Nograles if the Supreme Court would nullify the arrest warrant issued for Garci by House Speaker Jose de Venecia at the height of the wiretapping hearings. He said that this could happen, especially since that was not an arrest order for a crime committed, but only to compel him to appear at the inquiry.

So, when will the hearings starring Garci begin? Nograles said the Speaker meets today with the committee chairs to be involved in the hearings, and the hearings would commence as soon as possible.

I also asked him about the revamp of committee chairmanships, and he said that four or five chairs who had voted for impeachment have already been replaced. One was Gilbert Remulla of the lead committee on public information, who was replaced by Rep. Emmylou Taliño-Santos. Rep. Roilo Golez ,who chaired national defense and public security, resigned soon after the impeachment complaint was dismissed and was replaced by Rep. Jose Solis, while Rep. Loretta Rosales of the human rights committee was replaced by Rep. Benny Abante. Nograles said it was inevitable that committee chairs belonging to the losing side would be replaced, just as he himself would have been replaced had the impeachment succeeded. But he said it's not that easy to replace them since there are many "job applicants."

A problem like 'Garci'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE" IS THE Bible's promise. One would hope then that former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano is telling the truth, and that revealing all he knows is what's motivated him to come out of hiding.

However he performs in the congressional hearing, whether he ends up vindicating President Macapagal-Arroyo or confirming suspicions that she cheated her way to Malacañang, Garcillano already has much to answer for.

Now he says he has nothing to apologize for in his performance in the 2004 polls. But if this is so, why then didn't he speak up five months ago when the scandal first broke? At the very least, he owes the nation an explanation for his silence when his testimony could have brought the entire scandal to rest. Instead, by keeping quiet and then disappearing, Garcillano allowed the Arroyo administration to go through its toughest leadership crisis, sparking the resignation of key officials, triggering rallies and unrest, and sundering the country into pro- and anti-GMA camps.

What did he hope to gain by keeping himself scarce? What was he trying to conceal by his absence from public life? And what does he expect now that he has come out of hiding?

The President at least has apologized, albeit only for an "impropriety" in calling up an election official even before the final results of the election were announced. But from his public statements so far, Garcillano doesn't seem at all inclined to say sorry. He doesn't even seem aware that atonement is called for at all. Indeed, the one book that he says gave him comfort during his "internal exile" was entitled "Why Worry?"

* * *

IN HIS interview with INQUIRER reporter Michael Lim Ubac, replete with all the trappings of skullduggery, from blindfolding Ubac on the way to the meeting, to holding the interview inside a van with tinted windows parked at a seaside resort, Garcillano claimed that the reason he chose to lie low despite the warrants for his arrest was that he feared for his life. He received several "intimidating" text messages and phone calls, he said, prompting him to go into hiding.

But if he is telling the full truth today, his testimony—denying any improper phone conversations between him and the President, and casting doubt on the authenticity of the tapes "starring" his voice and GMA's—would have made it so easy for him or his representatives to seek protection with law enforcement agencies. Agencies like the NBI and the Isafp would have only been too willing to extend protection to him. After all, he would have been able to clear the President of any wrongdoing.

Garcillano's silence was particularly puzzling during the impeachment hearings, when he had the chance to spare the country from going through such a divisive and explosive proceeding by simply showing up and delivering his timely testimony.

It's entirely possible that Garcillano knows much more than he is willing to reveal this time. His preliminary statements could very well be designed to buy him some time, while he prepares for a comfortable retirement and negotiates for assurances of his and his family's safety. It just seems absurd to accept his word at face value that he and the President did nothing wrong, a truth he could have confidently stated five months ago.

* * *

BECAUSE he was nowhere to be found when his appointment to the election body came up for review in the Commission on Appointments, Garcillano has effectively lost his Comelec post.

This must be a particularly bitter blow to him since he was a "career" Comelec official at the regional level before his appointment as election commissioner. He is said to be among the more savvy operators in the poll body, one who is intimately acquainted with the ins and outs of elections from years of work in the field. After the Edsa Revolt and the revamp of a severely discredited Comelec, Garcillano was temporarily sidelined after new officials heard derogatory reports about him. But he was later rehabilitated allegedly because he had mended his ways and could put his expertise on poll fraud to good use, using the criminal's tools against him, so to speak.

But, according to a former Comelec official, Garcillano was found to have reverted to his old ways again, and was once more shunted off to an assignment where he could do little harm, though he was once more resuscitated with a change of administration.

Ironically, Comelec's top officials appeared only too eager to pin the blame for the election scandal on Garcillano soon after the "Garci tapes" surfaced. But it's not just solving a problem like Garci that bedevils the poll body. Christian Monsod, Comelec chair during the Aquino administration and conceded to have presided over the poll body when it enjoyed the peak of respect and credibility, says electoral reform in this country cannot take off unless the entire Comelec leadership, starting with Chairman Benjamin Abalos, is replaced.

* * *

SO GARCILLANO is right when he points out that he is no magician and that he could not have singlehandedly sabotaged the rightful outcome of last year's polls.

The awful truth is that our system of balloting and counting the votes is vulnerable at many points along the way, with the outcome most in danger at the institutional level, during the canvassing of votes which election officials and party representatives are supposed to guard.

"Garci" may have embodied the electoral scandal in the last few months, but the work of cleaning up our electoral system goes beyond the rehabilitation, or conviction, of a single man.

How do you solve a problem like Garci? By getting at the roots of not just his misdemeanors, but his institutional support as well.

Some notes on Mindanao

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

MINDANAO, MAINLY UNEXPLORED DURING the Spanish period, encompassed Butuan, Zamboanga, Mindanao or "del Moro," Caraga and a few other islands. In 1838, Misamis was mentioned in the records, and in 1858, Nueva Guipuzcoa, a name that didn't last long, was given by Capt. Jose Oyanguren to Davao during Governor Claveria's administration.

Oyanguren tried to conquer Mindanao, unsuccessfully. In the latter part of the Spanish regime, Mindanao was basically governed by the military under a general based in Zamboanga. There were seven districts under him: Misamis, Surigao, Davao, Cotabato, Basilan and Lanao (including Zamboanga).

Wenceslao Retana, in his introduction to Fr. Francisco Combes' "Historia de Mindanao y Joló," wrote that what we know of Mindanao in those early days we owe to Jesuits like Fathers Pastells and Sanchez who studied the people and classified them ethnographically. There were those of pure Indonesian stock such as the Manobos (although even then there were those whose ancestors had already intermarried with other tribes and communities) and the Guiangas (numbering no more than 6,000). The latter lived in the forests and were believed to deal in human sacrifice. The Bagobos, who were also believed to deal in human sacrifice and to drown babies born with deformities, were also part of this grouping. They were described as war-like, audacious and given to drinking. The Calaganes, almost purely Indonesian lived adjacent to the Culamanes as well as the Tagacaolos of the mountains. They lived beside the Digos river in the cape of Casilaran in the grand gulf of Davao. The Tagacaolos were also found along the gulf of Davao. However, there were those who lived in the uplands of Haguimitan and were known as Loac. Among this group were the Samals who inhabited the island of the same name. They were related to those inhabiting the isle of Talicud who were a mix of Moro and Mandaya blood.

The other classification were Indonesian *mestizos* such as the Manguangas, a war-like group, the Monteses or Buquid-non, the Atas or Ataas who lived in the vicinity of Mount Apo, the Dulanganes or Gulanganes also known as Bangal-Bangal who occupied the occidental part of Mindanao and were reputed to be bellicose mountain people that not even the boldest Moros dared interfere in their business. They built no houses, but lived in caves or in the hollows of big trees.

Then there were the Mandayas and the Tirurays, neighbors of the Dulangans in the north and the Maguindanaos in the east and in the vicinity of the Rio Grande. The Tagbilis or Tagabuluan of mixed stock were found south of the laguna of Buluan around the mountains of Matutun. They were warriors frequently warring with the Tirurays, the Manobos and the Moros of the plains. Occupying the area around the Laguna of Buluan and Sarangani were the Bilanes or Buluans, who were considered docile and humble.

In the peninsula of Sibuguey were the Subanon who were often victimized by the Moros, while north of the port of Davao were the Tagbanuas. There were also the original inhabitants, the Mamanuas (Negritos) who had been largely marginalized.

Forming the biggest community were the Moros, who were considered Malay of Arab descent. There were those from the plains, the Lanaos and the Maguindanaos, reputed to be war-like, daring and rapacious. They shared with those from Samal and Jolo the frightening tradition of pillaging and raiding towns for slaves, worsened by the fanaticism peculiar to a certain type of Mohammedanism. (It should be taken into account that the Europeans had been at odds with the Moors for several centuries and memories of the Crusades and the loss of Jerusalem and Constantinople were still fresh in their minds.)

Among the Moros were the Sanguiles, the Yacans, the Lutangas (in the isle of Loutana), the Calibuganes, a mixture of Subanon and Moro who lived along the coast of Sibuguey. By far the ones who sowed terror in everyone's hearts were the Samales Laud or seafaring men who attacked vessels in the high seas.

Father Hervas, S.J. toward the end of the 18th century made a study of the languages spoken in the Philippines. Possibly the first to do so, he concluded that the languages spoken were Malay dialects belonging to the Malay Polynesian family.

Not all the languages of the country had been studied much less those of Mindanao. Few missionaries had ventured into the south (the fault of the government, according to Retana) but had classified the languages or dialects they knew numbering 19: Ata, Bagobo, Bilan, Bisaya, Buquid-non or Montes, Calagan, Dulanan, Guianga, Lanao, Lutao, Maguindanao, Mamanua, Mandaya, Manguanga, Manobo (Samal-Calagano), Tagabeli, Tagcaolo and Tiruray. The first prayer printed in Europe was "Ave Maria" in Tagalog, Bisaya, Harayo and Cebuano.

Almost all the research was done by Spanish friars and even if their reasons were not pure altruism, the fact remains that there wouldn't be any records if these priests had not devoted time and effort to the task.

Here is the "Hail Mary" in the Yacan language:

"Al-lajuin timaun ma si queu Maliam, penno queu ma rajmat. Tujain itia ma si queu, balacat queu labi queemon emon maga dende, duc balacat ne buain becteng nu, ji Isa. Kududs Maliam, say Tujan acdua si queu ma Tujan min quite maga casaan, queitu duc nactu min camatey quite-Amin."

* * *

Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Is this my cheese?

MY FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH CHEATING CAME when I was 5 years old. I was given an activity sheet with a mouse drawn on one corner and cheese on the other. Between the two figures were lines with spaces in between. On top of the paper, it read, "Help the mouse find his cheese."

"Excuse me, ma'am. What am I going to do with this?" I courteously asked my teacher.

YOUNG BLOOD

Oscar C. Mejia III

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"You must find the way from the mouse to the cheese," she replied.

I was dumbfounded. I looked around and saw my other classmates having a good time answering the given sheet. Their pencils seemed to have made way through the page, while mine was still resting on top of my desk. I wondered how they managed to breeze through the maze when all I saw were dizzying criss-crossing lines.

My heartbeat halted. Everything froze as if life had been sucked out of everything around me. But looking at my seatmate's work, I was encouraged. She had traced a line from the mouse to the cheese without passing through the maze.

I did the same thing, except that instead of drawing a line across the maze, I drew a line on the empty space outside the maze to the cheese.

When the teacher saw what I did, she was disappointed. "What you did was wrong. You must pass through the maze!" she said, her voice rising.

"What about Antoinette?" I protested. "She did the same thing!"

"You mean you copied from her?" she demanded to know. "How could you do such a thing? Cheating is bad!"

I didn't know what "cheating" exactly meant. To me, it was just another word but the way my teachers said it suggested that it was something evil. The word had a great impact on me. Though my eyes weren't moist and I wasn't trembling, I felt something unusual inside. I had a heavy, damp and almost sickening feeling.

I was disturbed by the incident, and when my mom noticed my silence, she asked what was wrong.

"Mommy, *anong* cheating?" I asked her.

"*Bakit mo natanong?*" she asked in reply.

"*Sabi kasi ni* teacher, it is bad."

My mom confirmed that indeed cheating was bad and therefore I should avoid doing it. I never wanted to feel that way again, so I remembered the word and vowed never to resort to it.

But much as I want to move on, the despondency I felt that day continues to haunt me. Every time I am faced with a dilemma, I am again transported to that struggle over the mouse-cheese maze. When I am faced with big decisions, I have to be assured to avoid getting agitated. I have always wondered why the heavy feeling creeps into me during such confusing situations. I don't cheat, but I get the same feeling over and over again.

It was never my intention to cheat. What I needed at that time was not the correct answer but the assurance that I was doing what others were doing. I looked at my seatmate's paper not because I wanted to get my work done correctly but to have an ally at a time when I didn't know what to do.

Now when I find myself in a tight spot, I remember this experience because I need to be reassured. I need someone who will reaffirm my actions so that I won't be solely responsible for their consequences. I must have another person to affirm my decisions so that I can avoid mistakes and imperfections. I want everything to fall into place without a hitch.

This sense of idealism has grown in me. It has anchored my identity. I have slowly developed into an obsessive-compulsive (O-C) person, someone who seeks to find perfection in everything. I don't settle for things that are done haphazardly. I believe that everything should be done according to my own high standard of orderliness.

This mind-set is greatly reflected in my actions. When I cut a piece of paper, I must do it with scissors so that it would have no jagged edges. The things in my desk should always be neatly arranged, otherwise I get irritated. Books in the shelf should be arranged according to height. I tend to be meticulous in cleaning things and even in my penmanship.

As a result, everything seems to work to my advantage. I am usually organized. I am disciplined. I make sure that every move I make will make a good impression on other people. Every step is carefully planned and so I rarely commit mistakes.

On the other hand, there have been many instances when my condition can be alarming. Oftentimes, I find myself doing things repeatedly to assure myself that everything is perfect or done right. When I lock the door, I push the button several times to make sure it is really locked. When I need to bring something for class, I check my bag repeatedly to ensure it is there. I am afraid to commit mistakes. I exert too much effort to make everything perfect.

Such an attitude can be harmful. I could become so idealistic that I might detach myself from a world that is flawed and oftentimes chaotic. I might seek perfection in a world where perfection is plainly a myth. I might strive for my ideals and later consider myself a failure since idealism is unachievable.

Considering these fears, there are times when I want to flush the "O-C way of life" out of my system. More and more, I see my condition as a burden rather than an advantage. Yes, it is good to be organized in everything, but I must accept the fact that the world is full of blemishes that makes perfection unattainable. I also realize that mistakes are essential because they help me learn new things and develop into a better person.

I am not about to claim that being an O-C is absolutely a handicap. Perhaps, some people prefer to be overly obsessive and compulsive. I know that what I seek to reject, other people might want to keep. They may be contented with the way they deal with certain things while I am not.

Curiously, while I wish to withdraw from compulsiveness, I cannot. This is because I need the assurance of other people, which makes the idea of being an O-C attractive. I find myself going in circles, as the behavior I want to get rid of is the same behavior that keeps me from doing it. And this only proves one thing: I have truly become an obsessive-compulsive person and my condition is reflected in the way I look at life in its entirety.

Pondering all these things brings me back to my preschool years. I see myself in the mouse I encountered during my childhood. The only difference is that I no longer cheat as I look for that chunk of yellow cheese because I have already found it. Instead, I am this obsessive-compulsive mouse continually asking, "Is this really my cheese?"

Oscar C. Mejia III, 18, is a 2nd year BS Chemistry/BS Materials Science and Engineering student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Logging doesn't have to destroy biodiversity

CRITICS SAY THAT LIFTING THE LOGging moratorium in Samar will trigger ecological disasters; that it was politically motivated, intended as a devious quid pro quo for past or future favors. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

San Jose Timber Corp. (SJTC) is not deaf to all these concerns. While it cannot give up its legal rights just to appease its detractors, it is willing to talk and reason with them. SJTC believes that the negative media hype does not represent the true sentiment of the people of Samar.

Good business practice has allowed other countries to exploit their timber resources in a sustainable manner. There is no reason why the local communities of Samar should not benefit from this. Timber is a renewable resource; harvesting it has proven to be an environmentally sound and sustainable practice. A sustainable timber harvesting operation will provide for the people of Samar things they can never get from an idle timber stand—gainful employment, better food on the table and higher standards of living.

The real victim of political machinations is SJTC. The Aquino administration refused to allow the company to resume operations even though the moratorium order had already lapsed, and despite the recommendation of its own study team. That oppressive policy was also seen in the way the Aquino administration dealt with an obstinate political oppositionist.

Speculations that political maneuvering set aside the logging moratorium is unfounded. Records show that SJTC had been working for the lifting of the moratorium since the administration of Secretary Antonio Cerilles. Unfortunately, its requests were overtaken by Edsa II. The same was true during the administration of Secretary Heherson Alvarez and Secretary Elisea Gozun. Both DENR secretaries did not stay long enough in office to properly study the matter.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor took a brave and legally correct stand on the issue and ended the moratorium. The secretary could have simply avoided controversy by sitting on the request of SJTC. That was the prudent thing to do if all he had in mind was politics. But he believed that greater injustice would be done if the DENR further delayed the lifting of the moratorium.

In this age of environmentalism, the logging business is controversial enough without it being further muddled by political and emotional issues. SJTC assures the residents of Samar that it will squarely address these issues. SJTC is confident that given the right information on the law and science of the logging industry, the Samareños will support the resumption of logging. The simple truth is this: Sustainable forest management is not incompatible with the preservation of natural biodiversity.

—NAPOLEON J. POBLADOR,
legal counsel,
San Jose Timber Corp.,
Montepino Building, Makati City

10 virgins, 10 signs

YES VIRGINIA. HE TALKS TO US ESPEcially during these troubled times. If only we give time to stop, look and "stop running and smell the flowers."

Upon reflection and discussion with concerned citizens, we discerned that there are signs (events) emerging in our midst. (Jimmy Cura commented that there could be more.) At any rate the Gospel of the 32nd Sunday was about the 10 virgins assigned to meet the bridegroom.

Here are the 10 events (signs):

1. Raul Roco, the top contender at the start of the 2004 election campaign, got sick and then passed away.
2. FPJ (the icon of the *masa*) and Ping Lacson could not get their act together.
3. FPJ died. Amid the political turmoil, the *masa* could have carried him on their shoulders and seize Malacañang.
4. Jaime Cardinal Sin passed away. He might have told President Macapagal-Arroyo, in no uncertain term, to step down for the sake of the people.
5. The impeachment move could not muster the much-needed 79 votes. (Earlier, the opposition played poker, claiming it had enough votes under wraps.)
6. Teddy Benigno, the czar of Philippine journalism, passed away. He was known as one who did not mince words; GMA would have been mincemeat by now.
7. An FBI-White House spy allegedly fed the opposition with ammunition which explained the brazenness of those agitations for GMA to step down.
8. La Salle Bro. Armin Luistro, a convenor of Bukluran sa Katotohanan, was one of those very vocal calling for GMA's resignation. It is a tribute to the good Christian Brothers that in their clamor for truth, they discovered the basketball scam involving two UAAP players, faced the issue squarely, dismissed the culprits, then returned the trophy.

This is a very strong signal to GMA. The allegations and accusations thrown at her and her family should be addressed fearlessly and squarely.

9. Luisita. Owned by former President Cory Aquino's family, the *hacienda* was exempted from CARP. Dean Emeritus Pepe Domingo of the UP Institute of Land Reform noted that, based on documentation from 62 countries, only the Philippines' agrarian reform program features a stock option. Recent events have surfaced the tragic realities of farmers hardly getting their shares on the stocks.

We bring this up in the context of the Arroyo *hacienda* in Negros, reportedly to be adapted for ethanol production, being exempted from agrarian reform. A very welcome move, but will it turn into another Luisita?

10. Charter reform. No sitting president will welcome a change in the law of the land which cuts or reduces her (his) term of office. But events have preceded to bring this about—could God be designing this?

In the Gospel story of the 10 virgins—those who did not bring oil for their lamps were locked outside the room and had to bang the door to be let in. But the bridegroom uttered the most painful verse in the Bible: "I know you not."

—MSGR. NICO PEBA BAUTISTA,
Mass media Ministry,
Tahanang Ef-Benita,
Makiling, Los Baños, Laguna

ANTIQUATED trains still service Filipino commuters.

Modernize railway system

ON NOV. 12 LAST YEAR, A PNR (PHILIPpine National Railway) Manila-bound train from Naga jumped off its track, claiming 10 lives and injuring seriously 80 of its 312 passengers. The accident, which could have been prevented, focused the spotlight on the sorry state of our railway system. Sen. Joker Arroyo blamed the accident and the system's condition on the government, which allots a measly budget for the PNR.

Today, the Friends of the Philippines Railways calls on our government leaders to get its act together and to develop, modernize and popularize the Philippine railway system.

It would be a crime against the Filipino people if our train system, which offers an alternative to expensive air travel, would be left in its sorry state.

The average Filipino cannot afford to buy cars. But they can afford to ride on trains. Our light railways trains are showing the way; so why not develop our neglected railways north and south of Luzon and connect them to railways (existing or still to be developed) in the major islands. Our collective experience with the trains has proved that people use them because they are affordable, efficient and safe.

Moreover, railways, unlike roads, do not have problems with potholes. Thus, they save taxpayers' money which could be used for other good projects.

—JOSE LEONIDAS,
Friends of the Philippines Railways,
fprailways@yahoo.com

Outmoded view on dual citizenship

REGARDING ISAGANI CRUZ'S COLUMN on dual citizenship (PDI, 11/19/05), I strongly disagree with his view that "dual citizenship usually creates dual allegiance," which our Constitution describes as "inimical to the national interest."

This opinion of his does not reflect present realities. We all know that the Philippine economy is kept afloat by remittances from Filipinos living and working abroad, many of whom are—or will become—citizens of their host countries. The hope of the Philippines lies in these Filipinos. There is no hope in a country run by corrupt leaders. I don't need to figure out how much overseas Filipinos have contributed—and are contributing—to the Philippine economy. Not only do we send money, we also invest in land purchases, business undertakings, etc. More than that, we help our homeland through social programs, e.g., building homes in the countryside, sending books to schools, sending money to fund NGOs, etc.

The reality is, Philippine law must evolve with the times. And if Filipinos overseas want dual citizenship, they should not be denied this right. For the most part, they have contributed significantly to improving the quality of life in their homeland. The Constitution Mr. Cruz' quoted is an antiquated piece of document that seriously needs updating for the good of the country and its people.

—ROQUENA DOMINGO,
Washington, D.C.,
rrdomingo@hotmail.com

Not meant to be a 'walkout'

JUST TO MAKE THE RECORD STRAIGHT, contrary to a letter to the Editor published on Nov. 25, I did not walk out on the speech of Sen. Jinggoy Estrada during the Ateneo Class '55 affair. After sitting for more than two hours, hoping there would be an intermission, I finally stood up for the usual reason of older men. Estrada was not on the stage then. I was already at the back of the theater when he started to speak. I stopped to listen to him.

—FR. JOAQUIN BERNAS, SJ

Who's fighting for other rape victims?

I'M WRITING IN REACTION TO NEWS reports about the rape of a Filipina by US servicemen. I see all these militant groups and women's rights groups marching on the streets to express their anger at the accused Americans, the US government and the Visiting Forces Agreement.

As a woman, I understand very much their feelings. But what I would like to know is, where are all these groups, where are all these politicians when our women are being raped by local men?

This is one woman. What about the hundreds of other women raped by drunken Filipino men. Where are these people who scream for the rights of this one woman? Why don't they fight for the other women who have to hide their faces and sit silently, sometimes not even reporting the assault because no one will fight for their rights.

If they really care about women's rights, then they should fight for all women who have been attacked, assaulted and raped, not just for this one woman. Otherwise, they just give the impression that their fight for this woman is purely politically motivated; that they don't care about the woman; that they are just using her and the incident to stage their political views.

If these are the groups and the people who are suppose to fight for women's rights, then I think it's very sad, and we have a long way to go.

—MICHELLE R. VELHAGEN
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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Inbox

Garci's back! Your message to Garci?

hello garci! sbihin mo na ung totoo bago ka malobat!
—Jjuan, *cagayan*

Garci, Garci, where have u been? R u back to visit & save your Queen?!!
—Joyce CabaÃ±ero, 37, *Quezon City*

hello garci... goodbye GMA..
—Pauline, 23, *baguio city*

Hello garshi! Redeem yourself by telling the truth.
—marco bernardo, *baguio city*

Hello, Garci?!? Baka nakatap uli tayo kaya sabihin mo lang ang katotohanan. May dayaan ba?!? Hello?!?
—limuel abrogena, *isabela*

PLEASE HIDE for the SAKE of PUBLIC INTEREST if U WANT PGMA 2 STILL STAY in POWER! Let's cover our inimical activities, please!!
—gerry singson, *vigan city*

he shud tell wat he knows to end speculations dat are being used by many parties to sow disunity among us
—Gerard Gumban, 24, *davao city*

magpapakatoo ka! Dnt follow ur scripted answers abt d wiretap if any.Makonsensya ka naman.
—carlos venus, 45, *iligan city*

:>HELLO...Garci! i really hope that the time u were in hiding, u found ur conscience and have mastered enuf courage to face the Filipino people, and right the wrongs u'v inflicted on us.pls in the spirit of xmas.
—mark anthony letada, 18, *baguio city*

i only hope u tell d truth, and not d version of d truth GMA wants u to tell
—Jun, 37, *las pinas*

sna sabihin mo lahat ang totoo at ikaw magiging bayani pero kung scripted lang ang sasabihin mo, bumalik ka na lang sa pinagtaguan mo!
—Carlos Morato, *Mla*

Hello Garci! At last ur back! Are u now ready to tell a lie to save urself & GMA ?
—Edgardo S. Maligat, 45, *Manila*

hello garci! Nabawasan na ba savings mo o no allowance na kya ur back? U want media limelite again n spread political xmas snears?
—obet huele, *cvite*

Hello sir, welcome back!

hoy garci may paghuhukom pa.di ka mailigtas ni glue arrovo sa hell dahil walang palakasan doon
—james dayao, 50, *hagonoy*

My message to Garci is he should tell the truth about the hello Garci tape
—Rodrigo carinola jr., 31, *pasig city*

the whole country expects more lies from you, prove us wrong and tell the truth for once in your life.
—arnold Mendez, 39, *maragondon, cavite*

Should the 6 US marines accused of rape remain in the Philippines?

2 speedily serve justice, dey must not b allowed 2 leave.
—Rosalina abalos, 24, *pangasinan*

Yes, coz dey had case in phil, & shüld be punished in da phil.
—Giovanni de los Santos, 18, *Tacloban City*

YES they SHLD REMAIN in the PHILs.
—RODITO PATUAL, 36, *cebu city*

YES, kc d2 nangyari kya dpat lang na d2 sa Pilipinas.
—zenaida caguioa, *urdaneta city*

OF COURSE! WHY shud ODER COUNTRIES HANDLE our own BURDEN?
—LORENZ NAMALATA, *CDO*

they should remain, after all d crime was done in a country not their own, make love not rape.mangligaw sila di muersa...
—Rey Garcia, 51, *zambo ct*

The 6 US marines should stay in RP, not only for trial, but to serve their full prison term as well.
—jerome Escobedo, *cebu city*

by all means, they shud remain and be tried here, if we let them go, its bye to justice! Look what happened to other cases involving GI's..
—gigi sicat, *muntinlupa cty*

Do you support DENR's decision to allow Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's logging firm to renew operations in Samar?

no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no!
—Lorna Feliciano, 49, *Muntinlupa*

no. Have we easily forgotten the Ormoc disaster?
—nilo jaspe, 44, *marikina city*

yes, if Sen. Enrile is a GMA supporter this issue would have never been raised. Only oppositions r made 2 suffer!
—gerry singson, *vigan city*

No way, juan ponce!
—Early Sol Gadong, 22, *Iloilo City*

Der can't be a price tag on flora n fauna conservation. NASA has spent $trilions just 4 a glimpse or evidence of ET life.. Logging is wrong! 10 Angels frm heaven, plus 10Enriles n 10Defensors, hu r NOT frm heaven, can't make deforestation right, when its wrong.
—rene locsin

no, no logging in this country
—CHARITO B. GROSCOST, 40, *Subic Zamb*

No, the permission will be abused. Mr. Enrile should forego with his plan, mas i-rerespeto sya ng tao.
—Ma.Chetoni L. Marpuri, *Balanga*

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RP gold haul rises to 25, leads race for medals

From page A1

try's tracksters at the Rizal Memorial Stadium yesterday.

Watching from an elevated platform overlooking the entire track, Ms Arroyo clapped and egged on steeplechaser Rene Herrera in the 3,000-meter event he topped in 8 minutes and 56.13 seconds, way ahead of Vietnamese second placer Tran Van Thang, who clocked 9:07.89.

The President applauded heartily as Herrera crossed the line and exhorted Filipinos to cheer for their athletes in all venues of the biennial games.

"Let us pray for more gold medals to come," the President said.

More winners

Apart from Dagmil and Herrera, the Filipino athletics bets who triumphed were Mercedita Manipol in the women's 10,000m and Danilo Fresnido in the men's javelin.

Long distance specialist Eduardo Buenavista, however, proved to be a disappointment as he yielded the 10,000m title to Thai Boonthung Srisung after fading in the final lap.

Bantamweights Tshomlee Go and Esther Marie Singson took the men's and women's gold, respectively, in taekwondo, which is expected to be a major contributor to the country's medal coffers.

Olympians Donald David Geisler and Mary Antoinette Rivero followed suit by topping the men and women lightweight classes, respectively.

Over at the Mandaue Coliseum in Cebu, charmer Gretchen Manalad retained her individual kumite 65 kg title and Maria Marna Pabilore reigned in the 53 kg and below as the karatekas also announced their presence.

Fencer Melly Joyce Angeles clinched the gold in the individual epee event of the competitions being held at the San Juan Gymnasium.

A bonus gold came from Alex Pagulayan, Joven Alba and Leonardo Andam, who snatched the snooker team gold from the hands of the highly favored Thais, 3-2, at the Makati Coliseum.

Antonio Gabica and Lee Vann Corteza later triumphed in the 8-ball pool doubles at the expense of their Thai rivals.

The divers' golden expedition began when Zardo Domenios and Nino Carog ruled the men's 3-meter synchronized springboard and ended auspiciously when the untested pair of Ryan Rexel Fabriga and Kevin Kromwell Kong posted a come-from-behind victory in the men's 10-meter synchronized platform.

Thus far, the Philippines has four golds and one bronze in diving, surpassing its 2-2-2 contribution in the Vietnam edition two years ago with still four events left for today and tomorrow.

The 5-foot-1 Perez, a former coin diver from Davao, amassed 514.23 points to humble Vietnam's Hoang Thanh Anh, who garnered 461.46 points.

Domenios and Carog, silver medalists in the Asian Cup in China, committed very minor errors to accumulate 299.40 points and stun the Malaysians, ranked 12th in the world, who settled for the silver with 283.50 points. The Filipino pair is rated 14th worldwide.

Pedro Quina won the men's naquan and Willy Wang the men's taolu-jianshu in wushu. They were later joined by Arvin Ting in the men's taolu-daoshu.

Filipino-Americans Cecil Mamiit and Frederick Taino lived up to their world rankings by trouncing their Thai rivals for the tennis gold at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Swimming

US-trained Miguel Molina and Athens Olympian Lizza Danila and the Fil-Am-flavored relay teams spearhead the Philippines' campaign in the swimming competitions which get under way today with seven gold medals at stake at the Trace Aquatics Center in Los Baños, Laguna.

Danila, the most senior of the Filipinos at 26, and Heidi Gem Ong will tangle with 2003 SEAG quadruple gold medalist Jocelyn Yeo of Singapore in the women's 100-m freestyle where they finished second and first/ respectively, in Vietnam.

She's also entered in the women's 200m backstroke, where she also took the silver two years ago.

Molina, a standout from the University of California in Berkeley, banners the RP stint in the men's 400m individual medley with Palarong Pambansa star Ferdinand Frigillana.

The 21-year-old Molina, winner of the 200m freestyle in Vietnam, will have his hands full against Singapore's Gary Tan Lee Yu sans defending champion Sirisanont Ratapong of Thailand.

Molina, fellow 2003 SEAG gold winner Miguel Mendoza, Ronald Guiriba and Ryan Arabejo comprise the men's 2X200m free relay.

The women's team will bank on highly touted Erica Totten, who swims for Bolles School in Florida and surpassed three national marks (100m butterfly, 200m free and 400m IM) in the US NCAA this year. She will be joined in the women's 4X200m free relay by Georgina Gandionco, Chrizel Lagunday and Nicole Santiago.

The 17-year-old Totten, who stands 5-foot-6, will also swim in the women's 200m IM. Evan Grabador, fourth placer in Vietnam, and Mark Tano will represent the country in the men's 200m back.

Gymnastics

Roel Ramirez, silver medalist in the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup held in New York in February, will spearhead the Philippine campaign in the gymnastics competition starting today at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The 24-year-old Ramirez will be competing in the artistic men's team event at 3:40 p.m., after the women's action at 10 a.m.

"I don't want to say that it's a sure thing," said Ramirez, the reigning SEAG champion in the horse vault. "But I'll do my best to be on top in the SEA Games."

With 24 golds at stake, gymnastics is the fourth medal-rich sport discipline in the Games.

Malaysia dominated the 2003 Vietnam Games with a 9-8-4 gold-silver-bronze medal tally. Vietnam placed second at 7-4-5, while Thailand took the third spot at 6-6-5.

The Philippines finished only fifth with two golds, courtesy of Ramirez and Neil Faustino in rings, and five bronzes.

Also competing in the artistic men's event are Ramirez's brothers Ronnie and Al, Bonnie Brydon Sy and Frederic Lee Rocas.

Danielle Phoebe Espiritu, 2003 Games bronze medalist in the uneven bars, will lead the RP team in the artistic women's event. Cintamoni de Guzman, Emille Crista Santos, Kristine Raissa Saguisag, Patricia Kathryn Parasco and Ma. Virginia Acuna will also see action.

The Philippines showed no mercy in dumping Malaysia, 38-0, in 4 1/2 innings in the inaugural game of SEAG baseball at the Rizal Memorial diamond.

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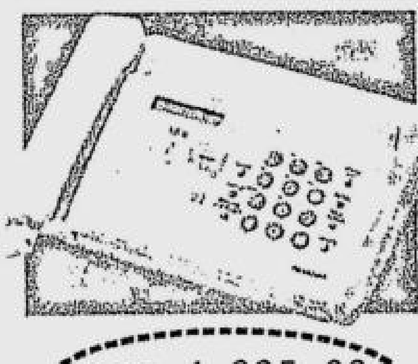

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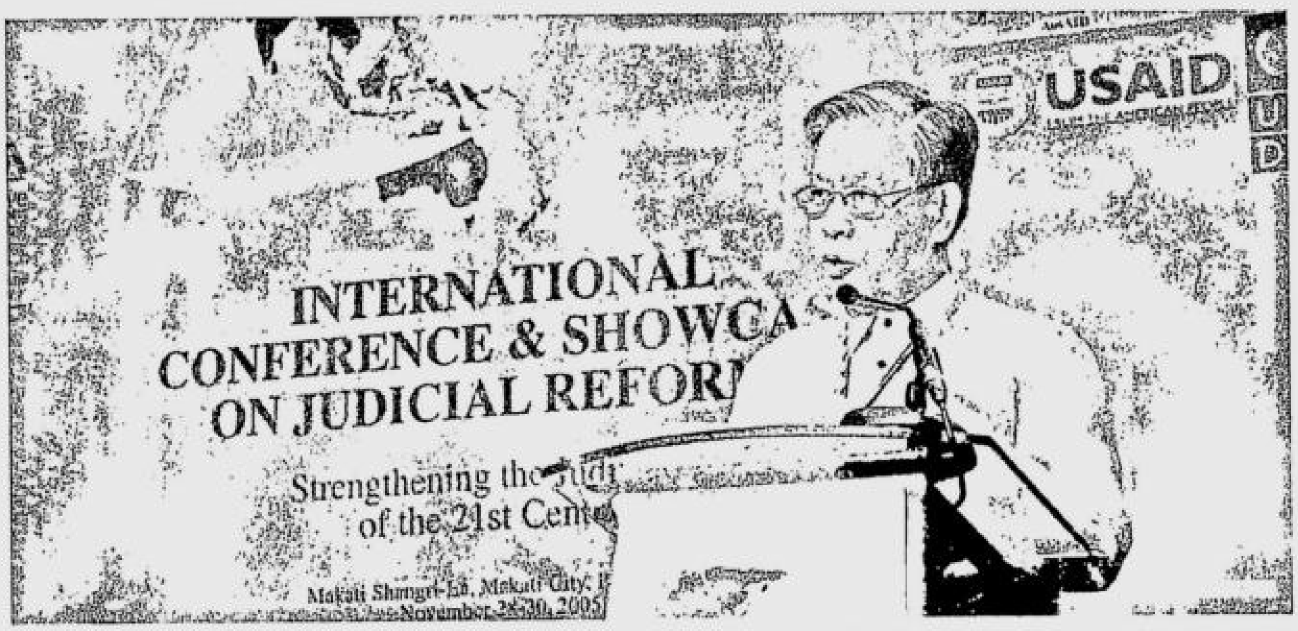


CHIEF Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. addresses delegates from 45 countries during the opening of the three-day International Conference and Showcase on Judicial Reforms at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RP judicial reforms cited

From page A1

implement a judicial reform program," said Panganiban, who chairs the three-day conference.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. told delegates: "A good government depends on a good judiciary."

"We are here to formulate the ideal state of justice. We are to be the architects of an idyllic system of justice," Davide said.

Apparently impressed by the country's efforts at judicial reform, international foreign bodies have agreed to foot the bill for the holding of the meeting. Normally, it is the host country that picks up the tab.

Clashing images

Indicating interest in the Makati conference, 45 countries sent delegates, including high court chief justices and their deputies from Russia, Japan, China, Canada, Australia, Malaysia and Pakistan, among others.

The Philippine image of a country in the midst of judicial reforms struck a contrast with the results of a survey on the country's legal system conducted in August by the Social Weather Stations.

In a sampling of 440 lawyers in four key urban areas—Metro Manila and Baguio, Cebu and Davao cities—49 percent said they were "aware" of judges in their localities who were on the take.

But only 8 percent of these lawyers had the courage to report the bribery, with 56 percent saying they could not prove anything anyway and 29 percent saying they feared reprisal, SWS said.

Justice on wheels

Panganiban told reporters many of the delegates had come to the conference to see the programs and projects the country had initiated in line with the judicial reform launched by Davide, who assumed his post in 1998 and is retiring shortly.

He admitted, though, that some of the projects were inspired by projects abroad, including Mexico's computerization and the "justice-on-wheels" program of Guatemala, where judges go to remote places to hear cases.

Bellwether of reform

Other programs the Philippines has undertaken include the electronic library, which enables lawyers wherever they are to access the Supreme Court's library through the court website so they could look into previous cases and rulings; the computer literacy program, and the decision of the court to exercise more transparency by creating a public information office.

In his keynote address, Davide said that after getting world attention for its "people power" revolutions, the Philippines had again become a "bellwether, this time in the area of judicial reform."

Davide's goal

When he started the reform initiatives, Davide said his goal was to create a "judiciary that is independent, effective and efficient and worthy of public trust and confidence, and a legal profession that provides quality, ethical, accessible and cost-effective legal service ... "

Since starting the program to weed out unscrupulous members of the court for "impropriety, immorality and other improper conduct," Davide said they had disciplined "a number of justices" and "dismissed 47 judges and one justice in a period of five years."

Winners and losers

A sizable number of lawyers has been disbarred, he said.

As for the critics, Davide said: "The justice system will always be attacked because in every case there are winners and losers, and I cannot imagine losers congratulating the justice system. Its just a matter of perception."

And people's mindsets are changing because of "our campaign against graft and corruption," he said.

Davide said delegates to the conference would affirm their duty to do well not only for their individual countries, but for the "greater interest of justice for humanity and civilization."

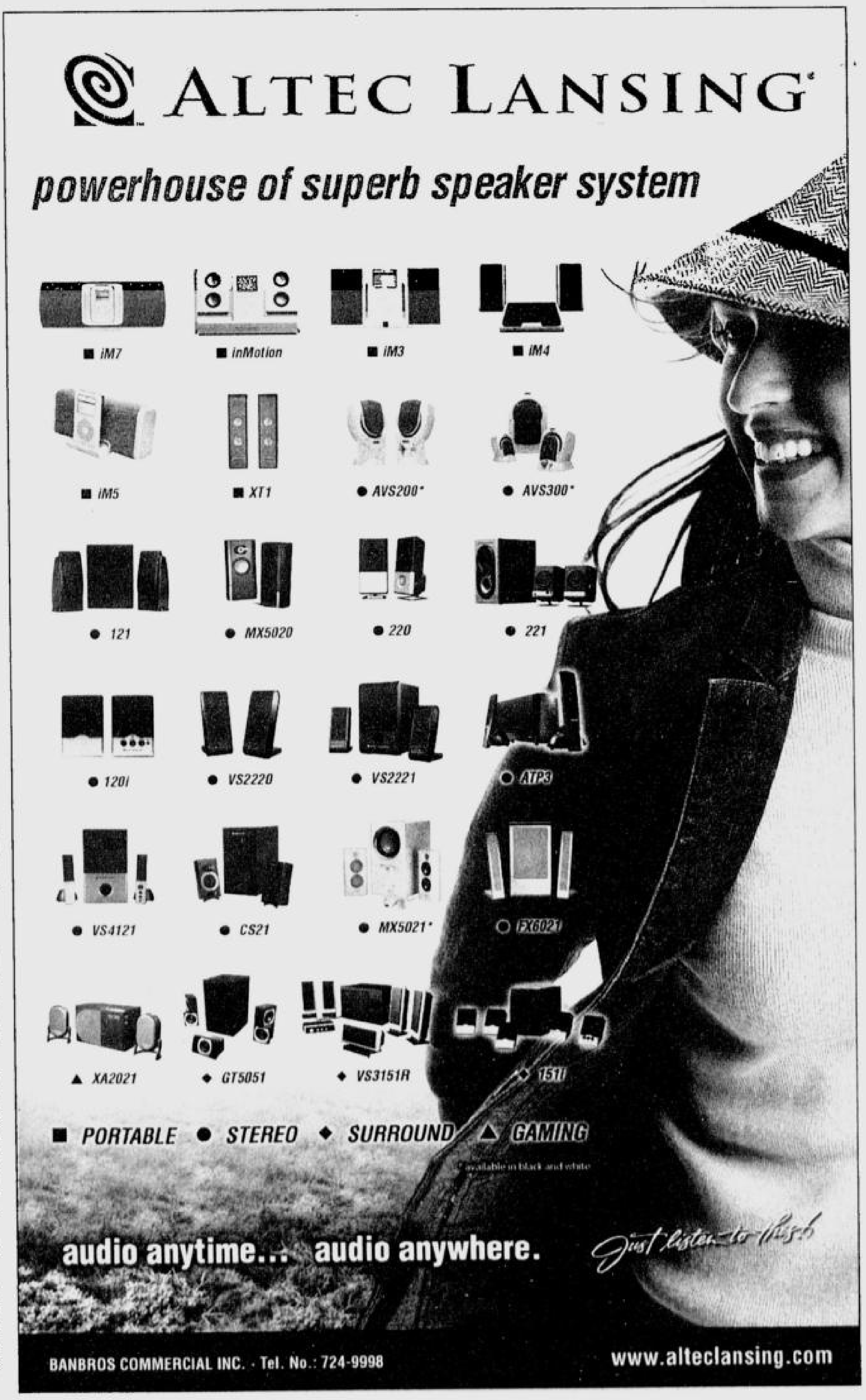
Top jurists

As of yesterday, the conference has listed 129 delegates from 45 countries. Thirty-nine of the delegates are chief justices or presidents, deputy chief justices or vice presidents of Supreme Courts, and senior justices.

Among the chief justices are Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Lebedev (Russia), Akira Machida (Japan), Beatriz Ofelia de Leon Reyes de Barreda (Guatemala), Tun Dato' Sri Ahmad Fairuz Bin Dato' Sheik Abdul Halim (Malaysia), Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry (Pakistan), Syed J.R. Mudassir Husain (Bangladesh) and Chanchai Likhitjitta (Thailand).

Other court officials are from the United States, India and other countries.

The funding agencies include the Asian Development Bank, Asia Foundation, United Nations Development Program, Australian Agency for International Development, American Bar Association-Asia Law Initiative and British Council.



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Senate to probe Enrile firm logging

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE OPENS ITS INQUIRY TODAY INTO Environment Secretary Michael Defensor's controversial order allowing Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's firm to log anew at the heart of a nature park on Samar island after a 16-year-long lull.

The committee on cultural communities, chaired by opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal, would focus its investigation on the possible displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral domains as a result of the order.

"The overwhelming opposition to the DENR order from the Church and the people of Samar prompted me to investigate this matter," Madrigal said in a text message, recalling that Samar residents, clergy and environmental groups called her attention to the order.

"They were concerned about the damage this order will cause to their environment, health and well-being."

The committee invited Bishop Angelo Hobayan, Bishop-Emeritus of Boronggan; Bishop Charo Nabong-Cabando; Fr. Cesar Aculan, president of the Samar Island Biodiversity Foundation and Blas Tabaranza, member of Haribon's board of trustee.

It also sent invitations to lawyer Lutgardo Barbo, former governor of Samar; lawyer Ron Gutierrez, legal counsel for bishops from Samar, and lawyer Melo Roldan, chief legal officer of the DENR for the 10 a.m. hearing.

The inquiry comes two weeks after Madrigal ahd Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. filed a resolution seeking an inquiry into the possible displacement of the Manobos from their ancestral domains in Northern Samar in view of Defensor's order.

Enrile's San Jose Timber Corp. (SJTC) has properties in Maslog, Eastern Samar and Las Navas, Northern Samar. It was issued a timber license agreement (TLA) in July 1972.

Family of 7 dies as fire traps them inside home

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Seven people were killed when a leaking liquefied petroleum gas tank exploded and caused a one-hour fire that razed a duplex inside a subdivision in Barangay Buhay na Tubig in Imus, Cavite early yesterday.

Supt. Efren Castro, Imus police chief, identified the fatalities as Edwin Barnes, 50, his wife Virginia, 50, and their children Angelo, 16, and Gelli, 12; Nina Pilapil, 23, and her siblings CI, 17, and Shay, 15.

Castro said neighbors of the victims in Villa Primarosa told arson investigators that before the fire started, they heard a deafening explosion from one of the houses at around 6:30 a.m.

After the explosion, fire quickly spread from the basement of the house rented by the Pilapils and subsequently engulfed the adjacent house that was being rented by the Barneses.

He said the explosion apparently started from a leaking LPG from the kitchen of the Pilapils at the basement of the house.

Castro said the fire was declared under control an hour later.

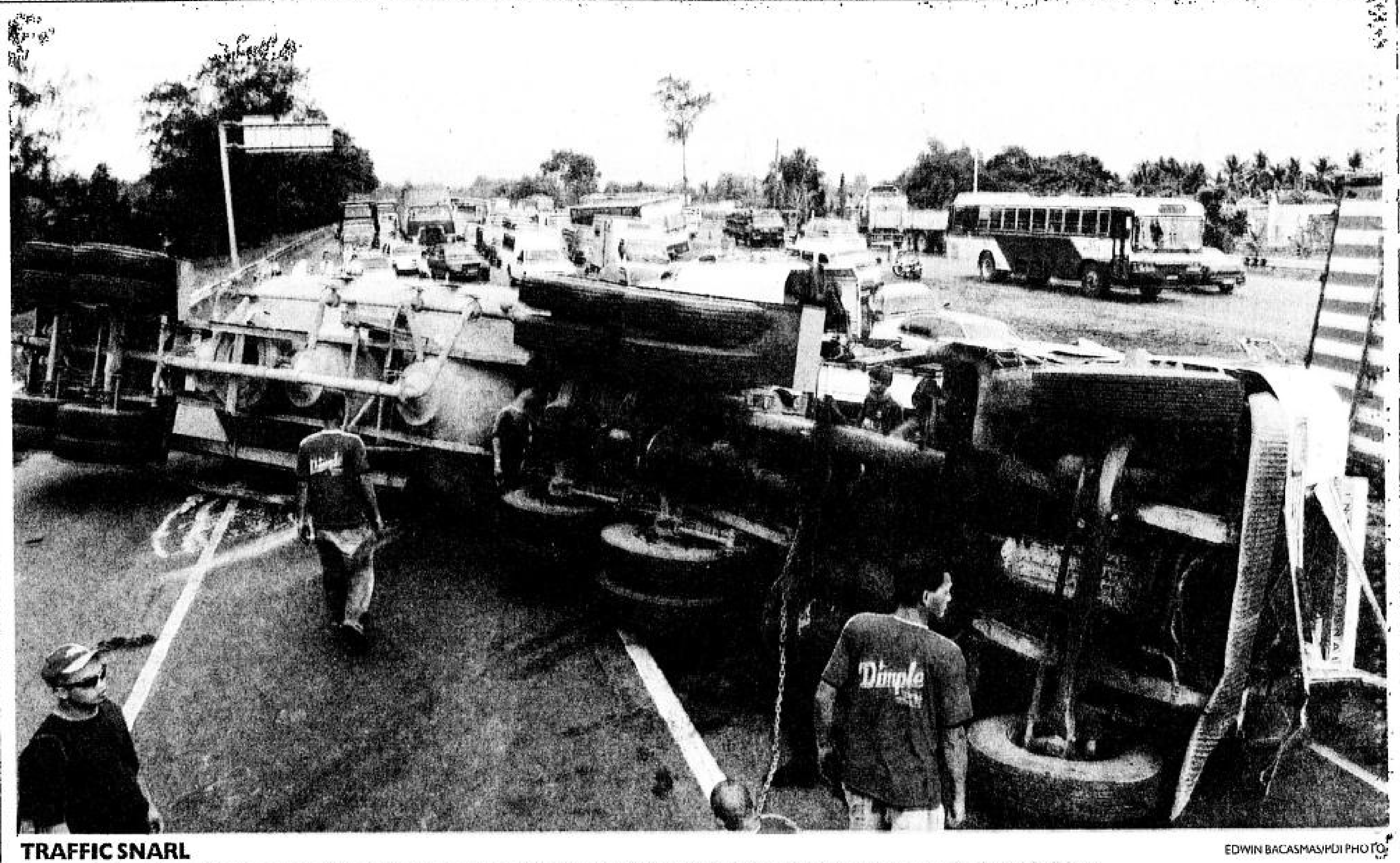
He said despite the efforts of the firemen, they failed to rescue the victims who were all asleep when the fire started.

Because the second floor of the establishment had steel grills, the victims were all trapped, Castro added.

"The fire quickly spread to the ground floor so the victims had no recourse but to escape at the second floor. Unfortunately, the building had steel grills. They were held there and could not escape," Castro told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

The local police and fire officials were conducting an investigation to find out what really caused the deadly fire, he said.

Police are studying the possibility of filing a case against the owner of the establishment as the houses had no fire exits, which is a violation of the local fire code. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



EDWIN BACASMAS/PDI PHOTO

TRAFFIC SNARL
A cement mixer lies on its side on a portion of the South Superhighway, causing a traffic jam Nov. 28 that was uncommon during holidays.

Peace zones urged in areas that turned into battlefields

LUCENA CITY—CHURCH PEOple, residents of war-torn villages, non-government organization members and local officials will seek divine intervention in a communal activity dubbed as "Pilgrimage for Peace" to bring back tranquility in the communities around the mystical Mt. Banahaw.

The convenors also plan to declare the spiritual mountain and all the villages nestling at its base as a "peace zone."

Estacio Lim Jr., spokesperson of the Kapatirang Alay sa Kaunlaran ng Bayan or Kaakbay-Quezon, said the activity will be launched once clashes between communist guerrillas and government soldiers stop.

"Our collective move is nonpartisan, non-political and nonideological. Our only aim is to restore the inherent peace of the spiritual mountain and for the people to return to their normal lives without any fear of the military and the NPA rebels," Lim said.

He said Quezon activist priest Fr. Raul Enriquez will lead the activity.

He also said the environmentalist groups Luntiang Alyansa sa Bundok Banahaw and Tanggol Kalikasan have also signed up for the peace campaign.

Lim said the mountain of Banahaw, known as a sanctuary for spirituality and peace, has now become a "raging warzone."

Local officials from the towns of Dolores, Tiaong, Candelaria and Sariaya have declared full support to the peace project.

"Peace is what we need during these troubled times. Any endeavor towards this goal is worth supporting," said Tiaong Mayor Raul Umali.

Sariaya Mayor Connie Doromal shared Umali's view.

Doromal said residents of affected village started to return home since yesterday morning.

"They were given the go-signal by the military. Hopefully, the situation will now return to normal," she said.

Candelaria Vice Mayor Bong Maliwanag appealed to guerrillas and soldiers to bring their war elsewhere.

"I appeal to their sense of compassion. to civilians. They are the ones getting caught in the middle of this mayhem," he said.

Amid Vidal, chair of Barangay Concepcion Pinagbakuran in Sariaya, said his constituents started to trek home yesterday.

"Most of us will be looking for our farm animals that have wandered far away, out of fear of bombs and gunfire," he said in a text message.

Fighting erupted anew yesterday in Lucban town, forcing at least 1,600 villagers to flee their homes.

The site of the gun battle is near the pilgrimage site of Villa Dolorosa, the Grotto of Healing and Purification, of charismatic priest-healer Fr. Joey Faller.

According to Elmer Litana, Nagsinamo village chief, a band of NPA rebels on Sunday asked residents in remote parts of the village to gather inside the barangay hall to escape being caught in the crossfire. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mystery surrounds Benguet's hot springs

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBA, BENGUET—UNTIL THIS time, no one could really explain how Sitio Asin in Barangay Nangalisan has been blessed with hot springs.

But officials of this third class town are bent on making the hot springs their top tourist attraction as the Department of Tourism turns aggressive in promoting the province's tourist spots.

Asin now has five resorts that feature swimming pools and hot springs—the Baguio City-government owned Asin Hot Springs and the privately run Bosaing's Swimming Pool, Rivervue Park and Swimming Pool, Pascua's Hot Springs and Palm Groove.

Rivervue, Pascua's and Palm Groove were established in the last three years, indicating a surge in the development of the hot springs as a potential income earner, said Magdalena Niwane, the town's tourism council chair.

"That's why we have trained 38 community tourist guides to assist visitors particularly in December and summer when arrivals are at their peak," she said.

IT'S AMAZING TALAGA!

Curative

"Many come to [swim and dip] in hot springs since the water is believed to have curative properties, like healing skin diseases," Niwane said.

Councilor Blas Dalus said the council is not aware of any scientific study that explained the source of the town's hot springs.

Dalus said old residents point to Mt. Sto. Tomas in the town's northern part as the source of the springs, he said, since they believe the mountain is an old volcano.

"Many believe that the mountain is a dead volcano that underneath it could be the source of the hot water that flows into Asin's rivers," said Dalus, the council's committee chair on environment, land and boundary dispute.

Mt. Sto. Tomas' highest peak is 2,292 meters above sea level. It covers 3,121 hectares and is considered a strictly protected watershed and forest reservation.

Theories

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Baguio City, however, has dispelled the idea that the mountain is a dormant volcano and theorized that Asin's hot springs could have come from the natural geographical conditions of the town's underground.

"The type of rocks and their natural formation could be the source of the springs but Mt. Sto. Tomas is not a volcano," said Felizardo Gacad of the MGB's mining and environment safety division.

"So there is nothing to fear that the mountain is geographically hazardous," he said.

Gacad said a geographical assessment is needed to determine the source of Asin's hot springs.

But with or without such a scientific explanation, Dalus and Niwane said the town would continue to improve Asin to cash in on the area's natural wealth.

Asin could be reached by jeep or car in less than an hour from Baguio City.

MILF asks gov't troops, Misuari men for truce

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has appealed to both the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)-Misuari Breakaway Group to stop fighting and immediately declare a ceasefire in Sulu.

Regional lawmakers in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao have passed a resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to "end once and for all" the offensives in Sulu since the military has declared the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group has been weakened.

In February this year, the MILF even offered to broker a ceasefire between the two groups, saying that it has an open line with their MNLF brothers.

The current fighting that started on Nov. 11 in Indanan, Sulu has already claimed the lives of about 10 soldiers and 40 MNLF forces and Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Scores have been wounded from both sides.

Muhammad Ameen, chair of the MILF Secretariat, said the fighting only shows that the peace agreement of 1996 is dead.

The MILF's appeal came as a seven-month-old infant and an elderly woman died while some 5,000 more villagers were displaced at the height of AFP offensives last week.

Local officials described the death as part of the increasing "collateral damage" in the continuing skirmishes.

Ruby Sahali, secretary of the ARMM's social welfare office, said relief workers in Sulu have confirmed the deaths of infant Nurfaima Majid and 60-year-old Layah Jamasali in renewed hostilities in Indanan, Sulu last Thursday.

Sahali said Majid fell from her mother's arms when a powerful bomb landed on a field near their home, while Jamasali suffered a cardiac arrest and eventually died when several bombs fell near her.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo, chief of the antiterror Task Force Comet based in Sulu, denied reports that civilians have been caught in the crossfire.

He said all mortar and air strikes have been calculated to ensure no civilian casualties.

Ameen called on both parties to rethink their respective positions. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI M. Bureau*

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MMDA target: Unsafe buses

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority (MMDA) yesterday gave bus companies a one-week ultimatum to comply with the agency's regulations on public transport cleanliness, as it vowed to crack down on poorly maintained buses.

MMDA Metropolitan Road Rules Enforcement System chief Mon Santiago said they would begin an intensified implementation of other regulatory components of the Organized Bus Route (OBR), a controlled bus dispatch and traffic reduction scheme implemented on Edsa in October.

"Now that we have already put the dispatch system at the terminals in order, we are moving to the enforcement aspect," said Santiago.

The first week of December would include an intensified campaign against smoke belching buses. Monitoring personnel will also look out for buses with tinted glasses or curtains, and those with dirty interiors and grimy license plates.

Offenders face the penalty of losing their turn at the dispatch line, as the agency would be denying violators OBR queue cards required before they can ply their routes under the scheme.

The limited dispatch system allows the agency to regulate the release of buses from MMDA-established terminals based on commuter volume at a given time.

As an initial step, the agency will spend the week validating tags pasted on buses when the MMDA conducted a bus registration procedure for the OBR in September.

Some 2,600 tagged buses had been certified legal, and only these were allowed to ply Edsa when the scheme was implemented, hampering operations of colorum or illegal buses. "Buses will also be checked to see if tags had been removed and attached to other units," said Santiago.

TURNOVER
Incoming Makati police chief Sr. Supt. Marieto Mendoza Valerio (left) with Southern Police District Director P/Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia at turnover rites yesterday. RODEL ROTONI

Dropouts join traffic brigade

By Jocelyn R. Uy

MUNTINLUPA CITY RECENTLY HIRED 50 out-of-school youths to help out traffic policemen during the start of the Christmas season.

The young men, aged 18-25, were deployed to the traffic-choked Alabang Viaduct area on a four-hour shift daily until Dec. 16, according to Olyn Jocson, of the city's Youth Affairs and Sports Development Office.

Some of the temporary traffic enforcers, who stand out in their bright orange vests, were also assigned near schools to help students cross the streets, Jocson added.

Each aide will receive P162 for a day's work.

The program is part of the Department of Labor and Employment's Kasama Ka Kabataan project aimed at providing emergency employment to young people and encouraging them to become partners in nation building.

Who will believe Garcillano?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SOME POLITICIANS ARE PROBABLY QUAKING in their shoes because of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano's revelation that a number of candidates talked to him during the canvassing of votes in the last election.

Garcillano said he would name those politicians at the proper time and forum.

The perception is that since President Macapagal-Arroyo had a phone conversation with Garcillano during the vote canvassing, the two had rigged the balloting in GMA's favor.

The President has since apologized to the public for the impropriety, but said she only wanted to protect her votes.

Following the argument that the wiretapped conversation between the President and Garcillano was an indication that Ms Arroyo cheated, then the other politicians who talked with the ex-Comelec commissioner also cheated.

* * *

I saw Garcillano being interviewed on television by an ABS-CBN reporter. He wore a Muslim bandana.

What was he trying to project, that he's already a Muslim?

The perception of the majority in Mindanao, where he was allegedly interviewed, is that Muslims, by and large, can't be trusted. Lest I be accused again of being biased against Muslims, that is the general perception in Mindanao and even in the Visayas and Luzon.

Garcillano's getup didn't endear him to many, to say the least.

Besides, how can you believe a guy who surfaced only now after hiding for many months?

All the while, he said he was in the Philippines and didn't flee to another country while he was being sought. If he was here all that time why didn't he surface to give his side?

If he didn't have anything to hide, why did he surface only now?

* * *

Many lawyers and people in the judiciary want Associate Justice Reynato Puno to replace Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. who is retiring soon.

Lawyers and jurists want tradition to be followed in the Supreme Court in the choice of Chief Justice.

Traditionally, the most senior associate justice is appointed to succeed a retiring Chief Justice. The practice was disregarded only twice: during the Japanese Occupation and during martial law.

Puno is the most senior associate justice in the high tribunal. This is apart from the fact that he's also very qualified for the position.

At age 31, he joined the government service as solicitor in the Office of the Solicitor General. At 32, he became acting city judge in Quezon City. At 40, he was appointed justice of the Court of Appeals, and at 53, associate justice of the Supreme Court.

Bukas, sa Araw ng mga Bayani

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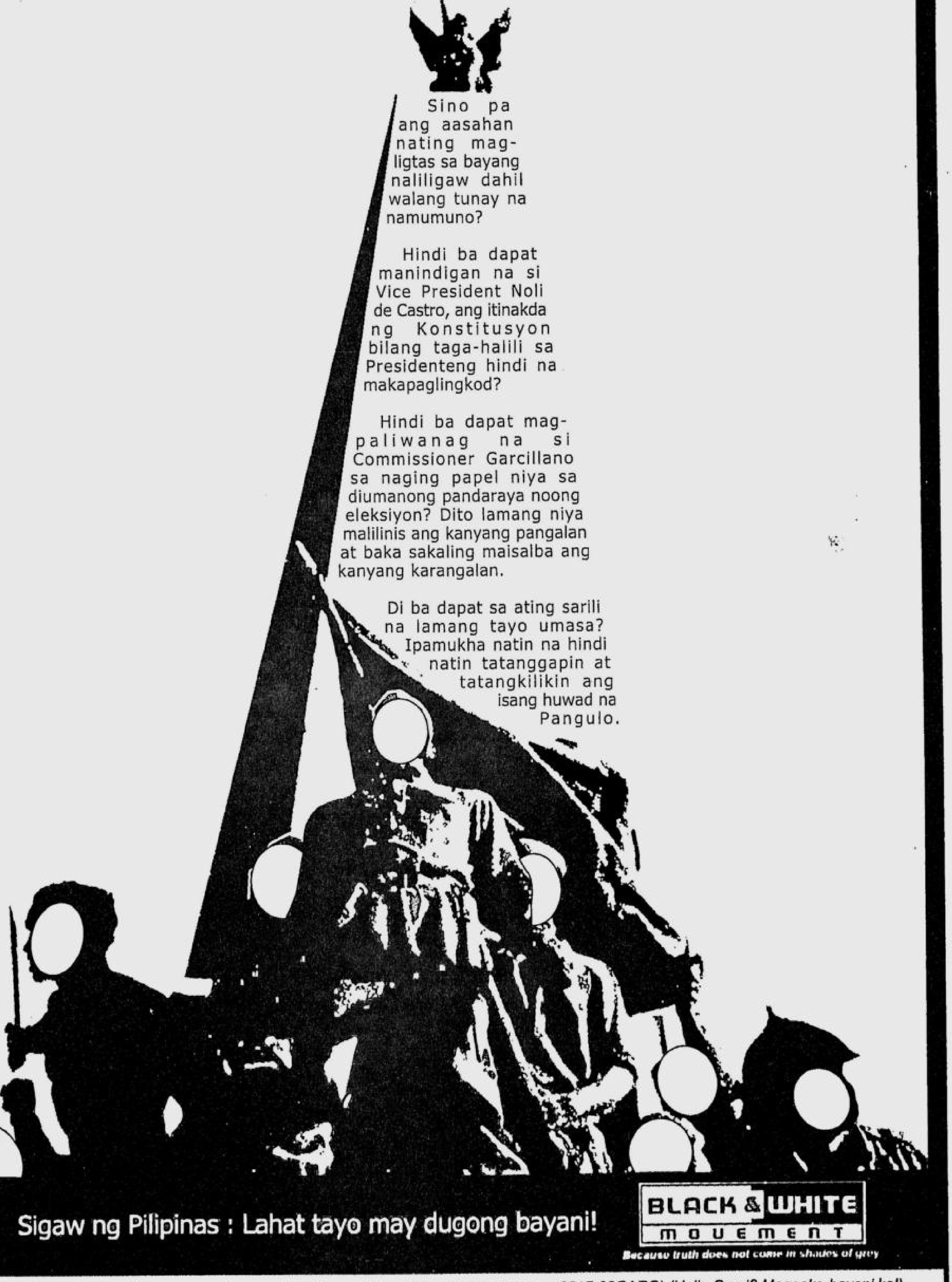

Sino pa ang aasahan nating magligtas sa bayang naliligaw dahil walang tunay na namumuno?

Hindi ba dapat manindigan na si Vice President Noli de Castro, ang itinakda ng Konstitusyon bilang taga-halili sa Presidenteng hindi na makapaglingkod?

Hindi ba dapat magpaliwanag na si Commissioner Garcillano sa naging papel niya sa diumanong pandaraya noong eleksiyon? Dito lamang niya malilinis ang kanyang pangalan at baka sakaling maisalba ang kanyang karangalan.

Di ba dapat sa ating sarili na lamang tayo umasa? Ipamukha natin na hindi natin tatanggapin at tatangkilikin ang isang huwad na Pangulo.

Sigaw ng Pilipinas : Lahat tayo may dugong bayani!

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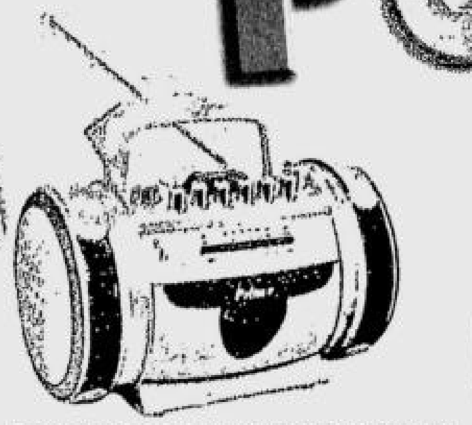

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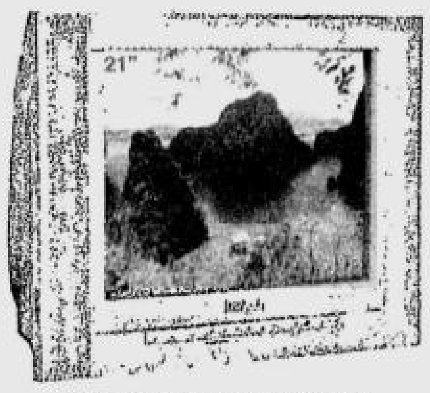

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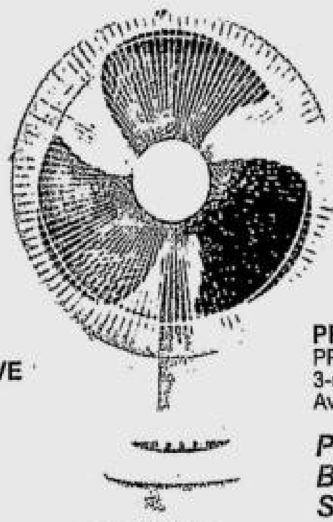

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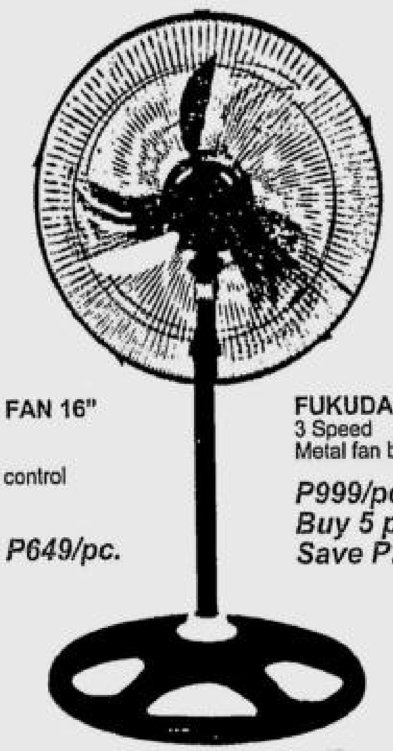

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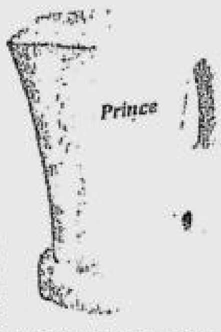

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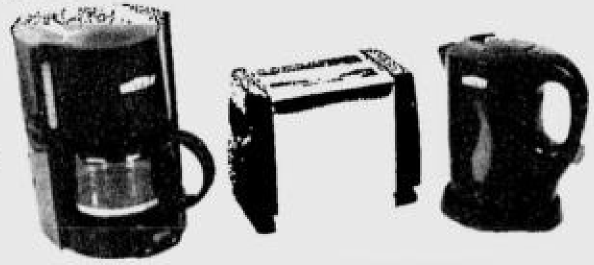

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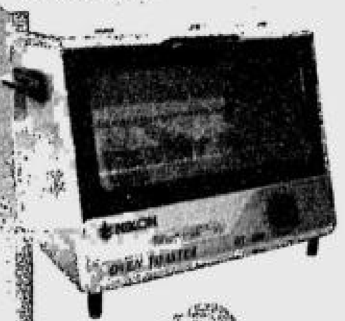

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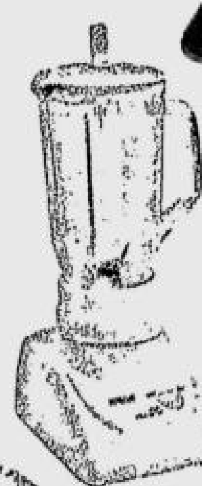

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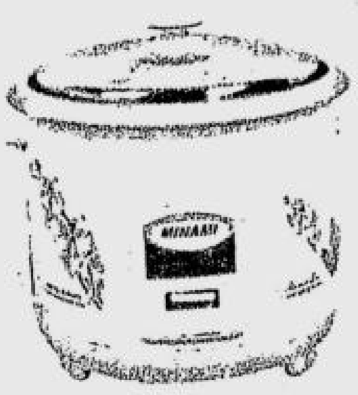

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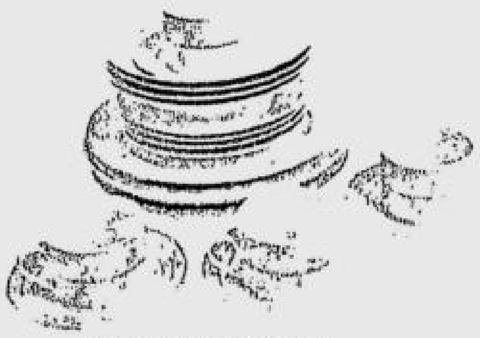

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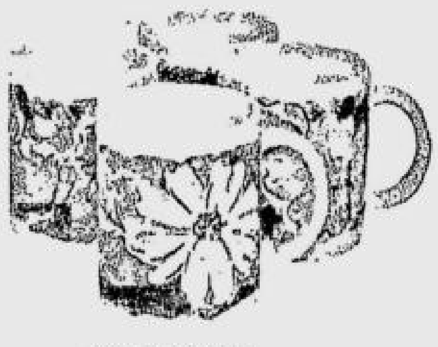

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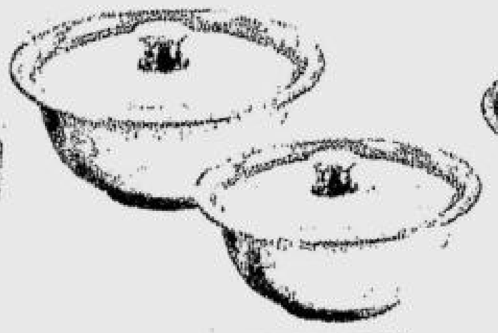

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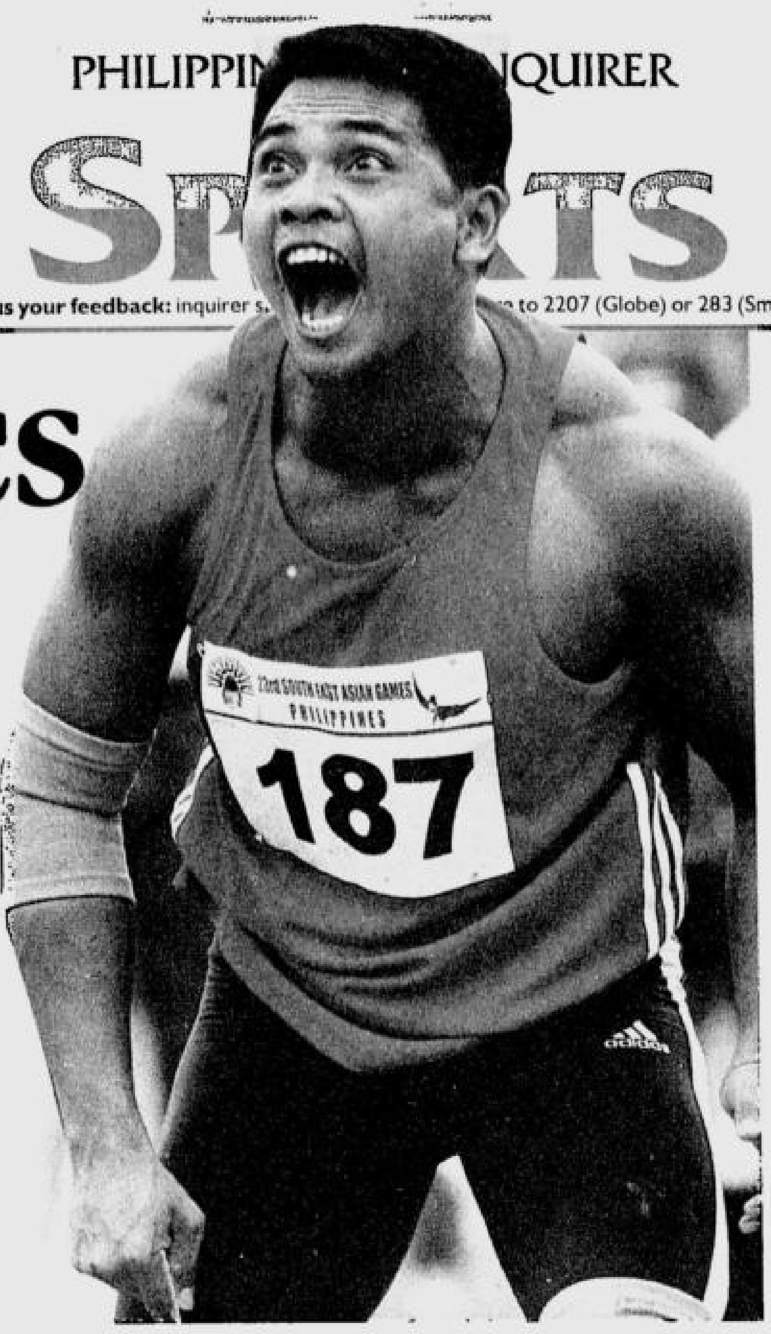
RP athletics bets seize four golds


23rd SOUTH EAST ASIAN GAMES
PHILIPPINES
187

DANILO Fresnido yells after making the winning javelin throw. RYAN LIM

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE ATHLETICS CONTINGENT scooped up four gold medals yesterday highlighted by a record leap from Henry Dagmil and an upset victory by a tiny long distance runner in Day 2 of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Dagmil set a new SEAG mark of 7.81 meters in the men's long jump and the 80-lb., 4-foot-11 Romblon native Mercedita Manipol provided the first reversal in the meet by ruling the women's 10,000-meter run in the morning to jumpstart a fruitful day for the Filipinos.

Hostilities ended at night with a whimper, however, when the highly favored defending champion Eduardo Buenavista sputtered in the final lap to lose the men's 10,000-meter title to Thai Boonthung Srisung in 29 minutes and 29.59 seconds.

Buenavista, who was expected to win both the 10,000 and 5,000-meter runs, tired out after setting the early pace and settled for second with a time of 29:49.77 before stunned crowd at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

But two other Filipino defending champions prevailed, with Danilo Fresnido keeping his men's javelin title and Rene Herrera repeating in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

The 23-year-old Cotabato native Dagmil, bucking a slight left hamstring pull, ripped Malaysian Mohd Zaki Sadri's record of 7.79 meters set in the Jakarta SEAG in 1997.

Mohd Syahrul Amri MD Suhaimi salvaged the silver for Malaysia with an effort of 7.69. Thai Kittisak Sukon went home with the bronze after leaping 7.54 meters.

"I tried hard right in my second attempt," Dagmil, who was sixth in Vietnam in 2003 because of the same injury, said in Filipino. "I knew that I would have a hard time in the latter tries because of my injury."

Thai Bouban Pamang, a 21-year-old who was clearly outweighed and outsized by several of her competitors, actually provided the first record-breaking performance with a heave of 55.06 meters in the women's javelin finals.

The athlete from Changrai province easily won the gold over Filipino Rosie Villarito, who could do no better than 49.43 meters. Zhang Guirong of Singapore, settled for the bronze after throwing the javelin to 48.70 meters.

Guirong returned to the field later to win the women's shot put with a throw of 17.40 meters, nipping countrywoman Du Xianhui, who threw 17.37. Thai Juthaporn Krasaeyan was the bronze medalist (14.15).

Fresnido threw the javelin to a golden distance of 70.20 meters, easily winning over Sanya

RP ATHLETICS/ A18

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RENE Herera clears the last hurdle on the way to gold in the 800m.

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SEA Games MEDAL TALLY

Country	G	S	B	Total	Country	G	S	B	Total
Philippines	25	11	12	48	Myanmar	0	4	4	8
Vietnam	13	8	11	32	Brunei	0	1	1	2
Malaysia	7	11	8	26	Laos	0	0	1	1
Thailand	6	10	19	35	Cambodia	0	0	0	0
Indonesia	5	6	9	20	Timor Leste	0	0	0	0
Singapore	2	3	10	15					

Medal Tally (As of 9:00 p.m.) November 28, 2005

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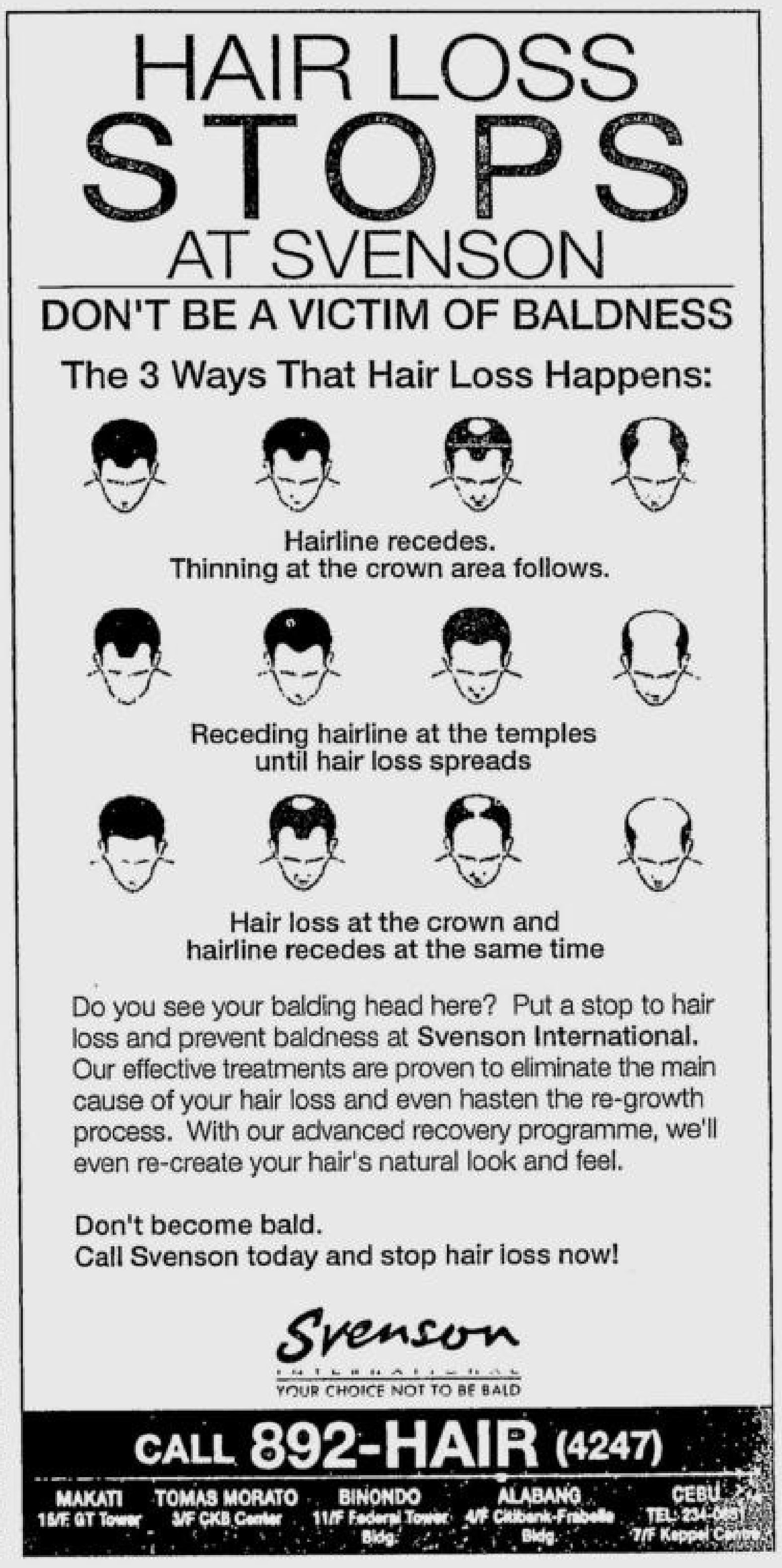
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Ominous 4-gold romp by RP jins

PASAY CITY—THE FRENZIED HOME CROWD MAY HAVE INSPIRED their victories, but their spectacular performances and drive to succeed that made the difference.

The Philippines swept all four golds in the opening program of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games taekwondo tournament yesterday at the Cuneta Astrodome, sending out a strong signal that the country is set to claim the overall championship.

Veterans Donald David Geisler, Mary Antoinette Rivero and Tshomlee Go, and debuting Esther Marie Singson starred in the victory romp.

"I think we can still win three of four more (gold medals)," said Geisler, who picked up his third SEAG gold. "I think the Philippines has a good chance of winning the overall title."

Geisler, an Athens Olympian, nipped Thailand's Patiwat Thongsalap, 7-6, in the men's lightweight division finals.

Rivero, who also saw action in the last Olympics, downed Indon Goppy Trismawanty, 5-1, for the women's lightweight crown.

Scoreless in the first two rounds, Go fashioned out a bullet kick and a game-winning counter 45 against Vu Ahn Tuan of Vietnam for a 2-1 victory in the men's bantamweight final.

Singson, a varsity standout, salvaged a 4-2 decision over Juana Wangsa Putri of Indonesia to clinch the women's bantamweight title.

The diminutive lady jin had earlier beaten Farrahwaheeda Haji Bujang of Brunei, 3-1, in the semis after downing Thailand, 12-5, in the eliminations.

Go, the 24-year-old jin from the University of Santo Tomas, won his first gold in the 11-nation sportsfest after missing a podium spot two years back.

"At first, I hesitated. I was trying to get a feel of how my opponent was going to attack," Go told the INQUIRER. "This victory is for the country."

The veteran Viet, meanwhile, earned his second silver medal in the biennial meet.

"This is a good start, the wins today is an inspiration for the team," said head coach Stephen Fernandez.

Geisler and Rivero were among five taekwondo winners in Vietnam. The other champions then were Dax Morfe, Veronica Domingo and Margarita Bonifacio. *Karla Magno*

MARY Antoinette Rivero (blue) celebrates her victory over Indon Voppy Trismawanty. ROGER MARGALLO

Pabillore, Malalad secure karate golds

By Francis Ochoa

CEBU CITY—THEY HAD SHARED IN the dreaming for this moment for as long as they could remember.

It was only fitting that they ended the wait on the same day.

Gretchen Malalad and Marna Pabillore anchored a two-gold medal haul in karate-do yesterday, rocking a jampacked house with contrasting victories in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Mandaue City sports complex.

Malalad tapped her chest twice, stared down Jamalliah BT Jamalludin of Malaysia and then snuck in the winning punch in sudden death to bag the gold in the +60kg category of the women's individual kumite—her third career gold medal in the biennial meet.

This one, though, had a special ring to it.

"I've always wanted to win this way, in front of my countrymen," said the longtime spearhead of the RP women's squad. "I've competed a lot of times internationally where the only ones cheering you are your teammates. I've always wanted to win with the crowd cheering for me."

GRETCHEN Malalad, true to form.

For Pabillore, the victory meant even more.

Getting to work immediately just a few seconds into her final match, Pabillore racked up five straight points that sent the crowd into a frenzy before capping a 6-2 victory over Thailand's Y. Torrattanawathana with a primal scream that seemed to sum up everything she felt about bagging the -53kg crown—her first SEA Games gold medal.

"Winning it here, in front of fellow Filipinos, makes this really special," said the Cagayan de Oro-raised Pabillore after a long moment of silence she used to let the reality of the day sink in.

After a bronze medal in Kuala Lumpur in 2001 and a silver medal in Vietnam two years ago, Pabillore finally nailed the gold right in front of her compatriots.

Nearly lost in the triumph of karate's golden girls was the gallant stand of Joey Pabillore.

Playing through the exhaustion of having to string up three straight matches and with the frustration of losing a final slot by a point to eventual champion Umar Syarief of Indonesia, Pabillore had every reason to give up in his bronze medal fight-especially after getting the lights knocked out of him by his Vietnamese foe.

Lying half-conscious on the mat and attended to by medical personnel for close to 10 minutes, Pabillore got up shakily and then-fueled by a crowd that egged him to get up and fight-struck for the winning point in sudden death that gave him the bronze in the men's +75kg individual kumite.

"When I heard the crowd chanting my name, I knew that I no longer cared what was broken or if I was injured—I just had to get up and fight," said Pabillore, a cousin of Marna.

The other bronze medal winners for the day were the men's team kata, Cherli Tugday (women's -60 kg individual kumite) and Junel Perania (men's -70kg individual kumite.

Pabillore, half-stoic, half-playful, hardly showed any emotion when she was finally awarded her gold medal. But when she stepped off the podium, she took a pole on which was fastened the national flag and then ran around the coliseum with it, bringing the house down. with a report from Marc Camasura, contributor

RP athletics grab four victories

From page A17

Buathong (66.09) of Thailand with Filipino Danny Gallenero copping the bronze with a heave of 65.80 in his final try.

Herrera captured his second gold in the steeplechase in wire-to-wire fashion with President Macapagal-Arroyo, who toured the venues to cheer for the RP bets, among the spectators in the stands.

Herrera, who lapped Timor Liste bet Elias de Deus going into the final 15 or so strides, timed eight minutes and 56.14 seconds, way off the 8:40.77 SEAG mark held by Buenavista after the rest of the starters failed to give decent chase.

Tran Van Thang of Vietnam was second in 9:07.89. Patikarn Pechsricha bagged the bronze at 9:13.27.

"I knew I had it won right from the start that's why I did not push it anymore after just two laps," Herrera told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "This is my second (SEAG) gold, but it was sweeter because it happened here in the Philippines.

"It's an entirely different feeling running and winning in front of your President and countrymen."

Manipol made the most out of the withdrawal of two key entries in her event, nipping Burma (Myanmar) bet Pa Pa in 35:38.04. Third and last entry Truong Thi Mai of Vietnam, who held the lead until the final two laps, bagged the bronze in 37:00.82.

With five gold medals, counting Marestella Torres' long jump victory Sunday, the Filipinos barely edged Vietnam for the overall lead in athletics. Vietnam also had five golds and four silvers but was two bronze medals off the host country.

Vu Thi Huong highlighted Vietnam's five-gold spree with a convincing triumph in the women's century dash in 11.49. Thais Nongnuchi Sanrat (11.63) and Oranut Klomdee (11.66) checked in second and third, respectively.

Lerma Balauitan-Gabito, who provided a dramatic challenge to Torres on Sunday, checked in a badly beaten fifth at 11.72 Thailand's Wachara Sondee topped the men's 100 in 10.47. *With a report from Hazel Sanculi*

VICTOR: Pedro Quina

Quina win sparks 3-gold wushu splurge

PEDRO QUINA STRUCK THE PHILIPPINES' first gold in wushu, dethroning Malaysia's reigning Southeast Asian Games champion in the Taolu-Nanquan event yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Sports and Cultural Center in Manila.

Quina, competing in his second SEAG, scored 9.30 points to beat the favored titleholder Ho Ro Bin of Malaysia, who settled for second with 9.21. Sandry Liong of Indonesia came in third with 9.16.

"I am very happy because I trained for four months in China for this SEA Games," Quina said.

Wushu federation president Julian G. Camacho praised Quina's feat and is expecting more gold medals to come.

Arvin Ting and Willy Wang, who won two golds each in Vietnam two years ago, proved Camacho right as they ruled their favorite events later in the day.

Ting kept his Taolu-Daoshu crown and Wang retained his Taolu-Jianshou title.

Dam Thanh Xuan of Vietnam grabbed the other gold medal, topping the women's Taolu-Gunshu with 9.30 points.

Susyana of Indonesia (9.20) picked up the silver, and Lam Kieu MyDung of Vietnam (9.10) settled for the bronze. *Llanesca Panti*

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

AQUATICS-DIVING (*Trace College, Laguna*)
3 p.m.—3-m Springboard Individual (men's finals)
4:40 p.m.—10-m Platform Individual (women's finals)
AQUATICS-SWIMMING (*Trace College, Laguna*)
9 a.m.—100M Freestyle (women's heats); 200M Backstroke (men's and women's heats); 200M Individual Medley (women's heats); 400M Individual Medley (men's heats); 4x200M Freestyle Relay (men's and women's heats)
6 p.m.—100M Freestyle (women's finals); 200M Backstroke (men's and women's finals); 200M Individual Medley (women's finals); 400M Individual Medley (men's finals); 4x200M Freestyle Relay (men's and women's finals)
ARCHERY (*Subic Bay Freeport Football Field*)
9 a.m.—Compound (men's long distances qualifying); Recurve (women's long distances qualifying)
2 p.m.—Compound (women's long distances qualifying); Recurve (men's long distances qualifying)
ATHLETICS (*Rizal Memorial Stadium*)
7 a.m.—20KM Walk (women's finals) (*Macapagal Avenue*)
9 a.m.—110M Hurdles (decathlon); Hammer Throw (men's finals)
9:15 a.m.—100M Hurdles (heptathlon)
9:30 a.m.—200M Dash (men's heats)
9:45 a.m.—200M Dash (women's heats)
10 a.m.—Discus Throw (decathlon)
10:15 a.m.—400M Hurdles (women's finals)
10:50 a.m.—High Jump (heptathlon)
11:40 a.m.—Pole Vault (decathlon)
3 p.m.—Discus Throw (women's finals); Shot Put (heptathlon)
3:45 p.m.—400M Hurdles (men's finals)
4:15 p.m.—4x100M Relay (men's finals)
4:30 p.m.—4x100M Relay (women's finals); Triple Jump (women's finals)
4:45 p.m.—200M Dash (heptathlon); Javelin Throw (decathlon)
5 p.m.—400M Dash (women's finals)
5:15 p.m.—Shot Put (men's finals); 400M Dash (men's finals)
5:30 p.m.—1,500M Run (women's finals)
5:50 p.m.—1,500M Run (decathlon)
BASEBALL (*Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium*)
10:30 a.m.—Indonesia vs. Philippines
BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER (*Makati Coliseum*)
10 a.m.—One Cushion Carom Singles (men's pre-q'finals); 9-Ball Pool Doubles (men's q'finals)
1 p.m.—One Cushion Carom Singles (men's pre-q'finals); 9-Ball Pool Doubles (men's semis)
4 p.m.—English Billiards Doubles (men's q'finals)
7 p.m.—9-Ball Doubles (men's finals and bronze match); English Billiards Doubles (men's semis)
BOWLING-TENPIN (*Pearl Bowling Center, Parañaque*)
9 a.m.—Singles (women's 6 games/finals)
1 p.m.—Singles (men's 6 games/finals)
BOXING (*University of St. La Salle Coliseum, Bacolod*)
5 p.m.—Men's and women's elims and q'finals
CHESS (*Tagaytay International Convention Center*)
9 a.m.—Rapid (men's team qualifier)
3 p.m.—Rapid (men's team semis)
5:30 p.m.—Rapid (men's team finals)
CYCLING (*Danao City, Cebu*)
9 a.m.—Cross Country (women's finals)
2 p.m.—Cross Country (men's finals)
FENCING (*San Juan Gymnasium*)
10 a.m.—Individual Foil (women's prelims); Individual Sabre (men's prelims)
1 p.m.—Individual Sabre (men's direct elims); Individual Foil (women's direct elims)
2:15 p.m.—Individual Sabre (men's finals); Individual Foil (women's finals)
3:30 p.m.—Individual Foil (men's prelims)
5:45 p.m.—Individual Foil (men's direct elims)
6:45 p.m.—Individual Foil (men's finals)
GOLF (*The Country Club, Canlubang, Laguna*)
7:30 a.m.—Women's Individual (first round)
GYMNASTICS (*Rizal Memorial Sports Complex*)
10 a.m.—Artistic Gymnastics (women's team finals)
3:40 p.m.—Artistic Gymnastics (men's team finals)
KARATE-DO (*Mandaue City Sports Complex*)
9 a.m.—Individual Kumite (-48 kg women's finals); Individual Kumite (-60, -65 kg men's finals)
1 p.m.—Individual Kumite (men's and women's open weight finals); Individual Kumite (-55 kg men's finals)
MEN'S FOOTBALL (*Panaad/Bacolod City Sports Complex, Bacolod*)
4 p.m.—Malaysia vs. Philippines (*Panaad Sports Complex*); Cambodia vs. Thailand (*Bacolod City Sports Complex*)
ROWING (*La Mesa Dam*)
TBA—Lightweight Double Sculls (men's group B repechages/heats); Lightweight Fours (men's group B repechages/heats); Lightweight Single Sculls (women's group B repechages/heats); Pairs (women's group B repechages/heats); Single Sculls (women's group B repechages/heats)
SAILING (*Subic Yacht Club*)
11 a.m.—Int'l 420 (boys'); Hobie Cat (men's open); Optimist (boys'); Int'l 420 (open); Hobie Cat (open); Olympic Class Neil Pryde RX:S (women's open)
11:05 a.m.—Laser (men's); Int'l 470 (men's); Int'l 420 (boys' open); Int'l 470 (men's open)
11:10 a.m.—Formula Class (men's); Olympic Class Neil Pryde RX:S (men's)
11:15 a.m.—Optimist (girls')
SEPAK TAKRAW (*University of San Carlos Gym, Cebu*)
9 a.m.—Hoop Takraw (women's finals)
2 p.m.—Hoop Takraw (men's finals)
SHOOTING-PISTOL AND RIFLE/PRACTICAL (*PSC-PNSA Shooting Range, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig*)
9 a.m.—10m Air Pistol 60 Shots (men's finals); Practical Shotgun Events (men's finals); 25m Pistol 30+30 (women's finals)
SHOOTING-TRAP/SKEET (*PNSA Clay Target Range, Muntinlupa City*)
9 a.m.—Trap 50 Targets (men's finals)
SQUASH (*Makati Sports Club*)
6 p.m.—Men's and women's singles (q'finals)
TABLE TENNIS (*Ninoy Aquino Stadium*)
9 a.m.—Philippines vs. Indonesia (men's Group B semis)
TAEKWONDO (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
1 p.m.—Bantamweight (men's and women's elims/semis); Featherweight (men's and women's elims/semis); Welterweight (men's and women's elims/semis)
6 p.m.—Bantamweight (men's and women's finals); Featherweight (men's and women's finals); Welterweight (men's and women's finals)
TENNIS (*Rizal Memorial Tennis Center*)
10 a.m.—Philippines vs. Myanmar (women's singles 1st round)
11 a.m.—Philippines vs. Vietnam (women's singles 1st round)
12 a.m.—Philippines vs. Laos (men's singles 1st round)
TBA—Philippines vs. Myanmar (mixed doubles 1st round)
VOLLEYBALL (*West Negros College Gym, Bacolod*)
3:30 p.m.—Philippines vs. Vietnam (men's prelims)
WRESTLING (*San Andres Gym, Manila*)
9 a.m.—48, 55 kg women's semis; 55, 66, 84, 120 kg men's semis
4 p.m.—48, 55 kg women's finals; 55, 66, 84, 120 kg men's finals
WUSHU (*Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym, Manila*)
9 a.m.—Taolu Duilian (women's elims/finals); Taolu Gunshu (men's elims/finals); Taolu Quingshu (women's elims/finals)
2:30 p.m.—Sanshou (45, 52 kg women's semis); Sanshou (48, 56, 60, 70 kg men's semis)
7:30 p.m.—Taolu Duilian (men's eliminations/finals); Taolu Qiangshu (men's eliminations/finals); Taolu Taijiquan-Taijijan (women's eliminations)

Bacolod tally could turn bloody

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

PLEASE DON'T BUY THE TEXTED BRAG that Garci has finally surfaced in order for the mysterious former election commissioner to preside over the final tally in the ongoing Southeast Asian Games.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, suddenly surfacing in the Presidents' Night at the Illustrado in Intramuros Saturday, appeared radiantly confident RP could swing it without her having to use the phone again.

Her Excellency briefly mingled, reportedly flashing that cocky smile, with presidents of the various National Olympic Committees, in lieu of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, RP chef de mission newly returned from self-exile.

Look. Based on the uneven history of the SEA Games, which the Philippines first joined in Malaysia in 1977, some assurance about fair play in the scattered venues could've provided comfort to visiting competitors.

* * *

For his part, Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez has dissociated himself from the boxing jury board in Bacolod.

The message from Lopez was prompt and clear. There will be no cheating or any Mafia-like manipulation during the tournament.

Without meaning to, Lopez has again pointed an accusing finger at a dreaded group in the international amateur boxing association, known by its French acronym Aiba, headed by Prof. Anwar Chowdry of Pakistan.

This group has been mainly suspected of controlling the assignment of judges, a practice that had resulted in criminal scoring during previous boxing championships in the SEA Games.

No need to ask Lopez how many times the Philippines had fallen victim to the malpractice.

* * *

Yes, Lopez had never come out to formally denounce several ring robberies that had victimized his fighters.

But, close to screaming in protest, he had often expressed displeasure over the abominable conduct of judges, who continued to be controlled by their hobbling, leather-faced, insatiable lord and master.

The question to ask the Abap head is: What made him sure scoring would be above board during the Bacolod box-off?

If the Aiba gang had done it before, how strong and powerful has Lopez become to be able to put an end to cheating?

Will playing host be enough deterrent to the evils that had befallen RP amateur boxing campaigns in the past?

* * *

Well, maybe all Manny Lopez had wanted to put across was this message: With RP as host, Filipino pugs cannot be expected to fall prey to the brand of dirty, shameless judging they had suffered in at least two previous SEA Games boxing series, in Kuala Lumpur 2001 and Vietnam 2003.

Fine. But do take note that it was only Lopez who has been assuring himself about a clean conduct of the boxing tournament.

He could not speak for others, like the main characters in that dreaded Aiba clique.

Take it from one who had witnessed enough of their dirty maneuverings.

That clique inside the Aiba is capable of springing a dirty surprise anywhere.

* * *

You're right. With the start of boxing in the 23rd SEA Games at the La Salle gym in Bacolod, the conduct of the judges also bears watching.

Pray that there won't be a repeat of the ugly episode in the 2003 Games when Vietnamese spectators nearly rioted after the RP fighters were openly cheated in favor of their Thai rivals.

Curiously, there's a strong likelihood the boxing finals could figure decisively in the overall championship race.

If both host RP and powerhouse Thailand live true to form and get locked in a grim race for the overall crown, boxing could decide the final outcome.

Manny Lopez could continue to distance himself from the jury board.

But when push comes to shove, scoring in the Bacolod SEA Games boxing could turn rather bloody.

CHAMPS AGAIN: The RP team made up of (from left) Johnny Arcilla, Patrick John Tierro, Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino at the awards rite after beating Indonesia. KARL SUMBELING

Mamiit & Co. capture gold

By Musong R. Castillo

IN AN ARENA THAT HAS TAKEN THE ATMOSPHERE of a rock concert, Cecil Mamiit has become the undisputed star for the top-seeded Philippine tennis team that literally belted out a golden hit.

Eric Taino set up the country's first-ever Southeast Asian Games men's team gold in tennis, and Mamiit whipped up the Rizal Memorial Center Court crowd into a frenzy as he clinched the title clash with Indonesia with another overpowering performance.

Taino lost the first set for the second straight day before rallying for a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Indon star Suwandi Suwandi.

Mamiit then sealed the deal with a 6-1, 6-2 thumping of Prima Simpatiaji in a match that had the fans stomping their feet and singing football's Ole! Ole! Ole!

Mamiit was on the court for only 63 minutes against the Indon and spent a seemingly longer time in leading the celebration, where he went to a dancing gallery, who adored him like a rock star.

"It's a relief because I promised one (gold medal)," Mamiit said. "I feel very proud and overjoyed. This (victory) is for everybody to enjoy. It's both a pleasure and an honor."

The Philippines missed sweeping the Indons after Johnny Arcilla and Patrick John Tierro lost to Sunu Trijat and Bonit Wiryawan, 3-6, 6-7 (4-7) in the no-bearing doubles.

Mamiit, who will be the No. 2 seed in singles play that starts today, lost only 12 points in winning the first set and dropped just 22 in the second.

The victory all but erased the bitter memory of the RP girls getting annihilated by Indonesia, which eventually claimed the women's team gold also with a 2-1 win over Thailand later.

Romana Tedjakasuma nipped Napoporn Tongsalee, 6-3, 1-6, 7-6(3) and Wynne Prakusia trounced Suchanan Viratprasert, 6-3, 6-3 to clinch the match after the singles matches.

The tandem of Ayu Fani Damayanti and Septo Mende whipped Montinee Tangpong and Thassha Vitayaviroj, 6-3,6-3.

The 30-year-old Taino, cool and calculating, patiently worked his way back in his match with Suwandi. *With a report from Apolinario Mapacpac*

Favored RP posts 38-0 baseball rout

By Musong R. Castillo

THIS ONE'S FOR REAL.

The Philippines pelted Malaysia with 22 runs in the second inning yesterday and went on to post an abbreviated 38-0 victory in the first-ever official baseball game in the Southeast Asian Games.

Rightfielder Andro Cuyugan and Erick Francisco both went 3-for-3 and the Philippine pitching staff was untouched the four and a half-inning match that spoke of why the Filipinos are heavily favored to win the inaugural staging of the sport.

Left-handed hurler Joseph Orillana was credited with the win, striking out seven Malaysians in three innings before Roy Baclay completed the no-hit, no-run job for RP by retiring the last three batters he faced.

"With this kind of hitting, we can't lose," said RP coach Edgar delos Reyes in Filipino. "Hopefully we can hit at this level consistently and our (good) pitching will continue."

Cuyugan, Virgilio Roxas and Francisco blasted home runs as the Filipinos peppered Malaysia with 24 hits. The hosts also came up with seven doubles and three triples.

Centerfielder Jonash Ponce had a triple and drove in six runs, while Francisco and Cuyugan, whose fielding error finally allowed a Malaysian to reach base, had four RBIs each.

Thailand also debuted with aplomb, scoring six runs in the sixth inning to rip Indonesia, 14-6.

Cuyugan had two doubles and a rare grand slam which highlighted the second-inning rout.

Next up for the RP clouters will be Indonesia today at 10:30 a.m. also at the Rizal Memorial diamond, before Burma (Myanmar) debuts against the Malaysians at 2 p.m.

Tournament format calls for the five-team field to play a single round elimination with the top four teams advancing to a final four-team semis.

RP booters in crucial tiff vs tough Malaysia today

BACOLOD CITY—AFter a confidence-building 4-2 victory over Cambodia, Philippine men's football team coach Aris Caslib says winning is no longer a problem for his squad anymore.

His bold statement will be put to test today when the RP XI collides with Malaysia at 4 p.m. in a match that will determine the second semifinalist in Group A.

"We can deliver the win," Caslib told the INQUIRER on the eve of the showdown which is expected to draw another huge crowd that will include President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The crowd is expected to be part of the battle on the pitch."

One thing going for Caslib is that all his players are coming into the game all in good shape, unlike in the RP-Cambodia match where three key players including skipper Ali Borromeo endured a bum stomach to help the squad pull off the win.

The RP booters, who lost to Thailand, 1-0, Wednesday, have no recourse but to win the match if they want to barge into their first semifinal since the 1991 SEAG in Manila. A draw will see the Malaysians through to the next round owing to their better goal difference.

"The Malaysians are calculating but we can keep up with them," said Caslib, who is expected to bank on Fil-foreigners James and Phil Younghusband and peppery winger Emilio Caligdong—the second half spark plug against Cambodia.

As seen in their first two games, the Malaysians and Filipinos have similar style of play, relying mainly on crisp and short passing at midfield in pushing the tempo. Thailand coach Chanvit Phalajivin has tipped the Philippines to win the match because of the overwhelming crowd support.

Thailand and Vietnam earlier clinched the first two semifinal slots in the nine-team tournament.

Cedelf Tupas, PDI Visayas Bureau

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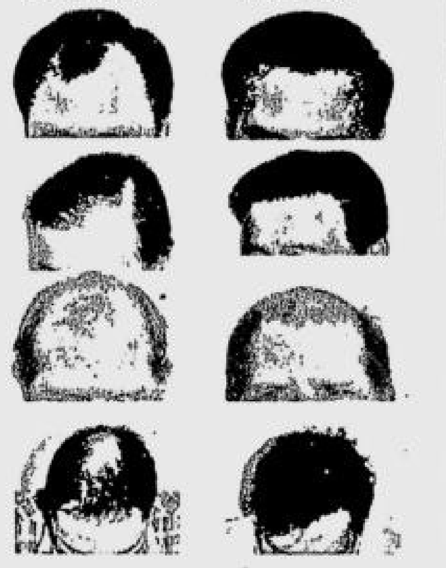

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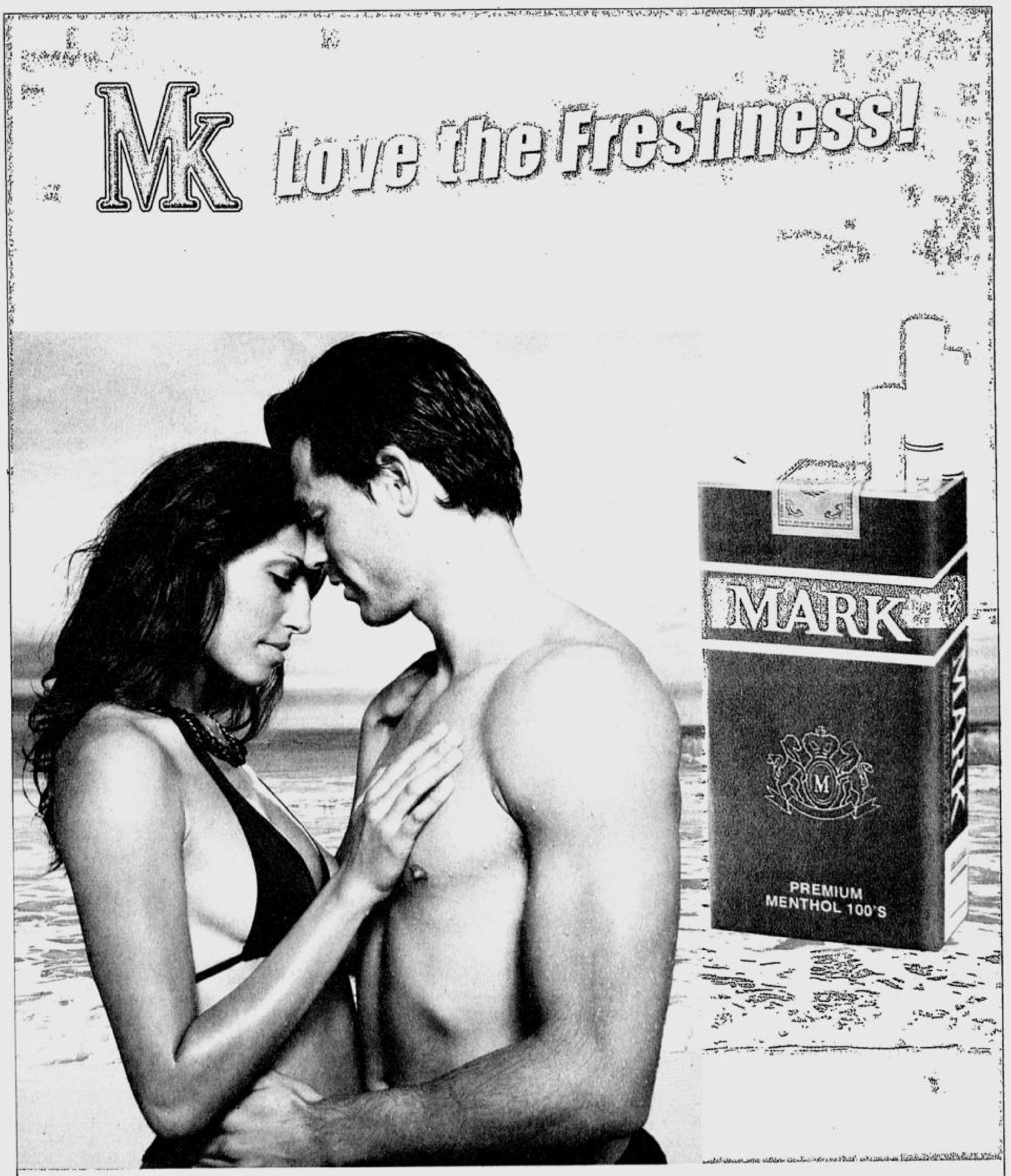

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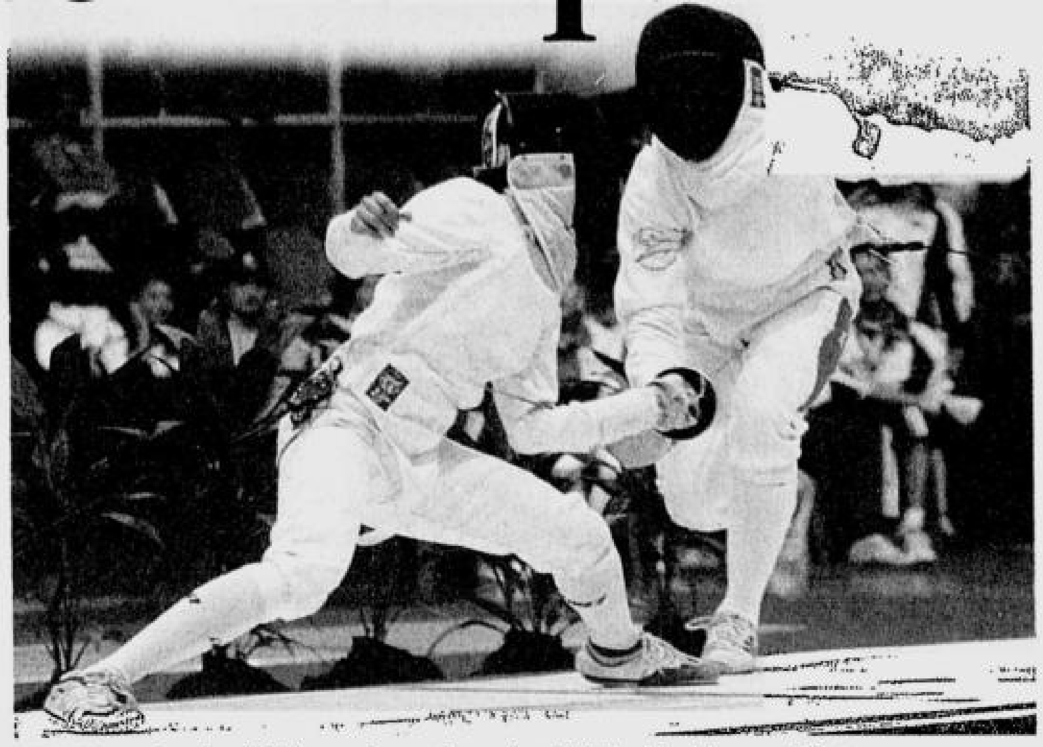
Angeles strikes gold; Viet foils Franquelli



MELLY Joyce Angeles (left) lunges for a point against Thi Nhu Hoa Nguyen of Vietnam. RAFFY LERMA

MELLY JOYCE ANGELES BROKE THE ICE for the Philippine fencing team, nipping Nguyen Thi Nhu Hoa of Vietnam in the women's individual epee finals of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the San Juan Gymnasium.

Angeles hacked out a 15-13 victory when the Vietnamese went low while she attacked high to score the hit that ended the match.

"After long years of work, finally (a gold)," said fencing coach Orlando Guerrero. "*Malakas ang* Vietnam, *pero basta walang takot, kaya iyan* (Vietnam is strong, but we're determined to beat them)."

As if to underscore their strength, the Vietnamese put away the women's individual sabre gold as Nguyen Thi Le Dung nipped Filipino Joanna Franquelli by another close 15-13 score.

"It was close all the way, but the Vietnamese got the last two points," said Franquelli. "Now I know her game and I know what to do when we face each other in the team event."

Thai Choochokkul Siritida and Vietnamese Ha Thi Sen shared the bronze medal in the women's epee. Lim Yean Hong of Singapore and Starrat Sirawalai of Thailand won the bronze medals in the women's sabre.

Angeles beat Sir Idar Isnawaty of Indonesia, 15-11, in the quarterfinals, then upended Choochokkul in the semis, 15-7.

Franquelli beat Nancy Noralita Manopo of Indonesia in the round of eight, 15-9, and dominated Lim in the bronze medal match, 15-6.

Jocelyn Naval lost to Starrat in the women's individual sabre quarterfinals, 12-15, while Harlene Orendain bowed out to Choochokkul, 12-15.

JP Abcede

Filipino boxers in blazing start

By Recah Trinidad

BACOLOD CITY—PINWEIGHT Juanito Magliquian set the Philippine campaign off to a fiery start by blasting Jen Dyaman of Cambodia to submission in Day 1 of the boxing competitions at the La Salle Coliseum here yesterday.

The 30-year-old Magliquian jumped from his corner and rained relentless combinations on his baffled foe who dropped to his knees and was declared automatic loser (RSC-O) after a minute and four seconds of the first round with the Filipino spitfire up, 16-0.

Magliquian's heroics, celebrated by a big, lively crowd, was a resounding follow-up to the back-to-back victories of two Filipina fighters in the female division that actually ushered in boxing action in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

In the first bout of the program, Alice Kate Aparri blanked pinweight Lo Thuy Nam of Vietnam, 15-0, to emerge winner via referee stopped contest-outclassed (RSC-O) at 1:24 of the second round.

Filipina flyweight Annie Albania next took charge by overwhelming Thailand's Juthatip Chusang, 19-5, for another RSC-O feat in 54 seconds of the second round.

Magliquian's next opponent will be Thailand's Keanus Pangpayoon. Magliquian said this was the same opponent whom he manhandled but was declared the winner in the Vietnam Games in 2003.

Flyweight Warlito Pareñas overpowered Nhotin Holapatiphone of Laos, 26-6, in another RP stoppage later in the evening, before Somjit Jongjohor of Thailand made a demonstration of world-class boxing.

Parenas meets the celebrated Thai in the next round.

Thailand sent a powerhouse team here in a bid to sustain its dominance in Southeast Asia.

But Abap president Manny Lopez said they have prepared hard and would do their best to frustrate the Thai bid at another dominance.

The Philippines won only one gold medal against seven by Thailand in Vietnam.

Lopez, also the secretary general of the Federation of Asian Amateur Boxing (FAAB), the body in charge of this current championship, formally announced he would not be part of the board of jury during the meeting of team managers.

Molina, Totten lead RP swim bid

LOS BAÑOS—SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games veterans Miguel Molina and Lizza Danila and the Fil-Am-flavored relay teams spearhead the Philippines' highly anticipated campaign as the 23rd Southeast Asian Games swimming starts today with seven gold medals at stake at the Trace Aquatics Center here.

There were no grand promises from the coaching staff led by Olympian and former Asian champion Pinky Brosas. He said his wards are just hoping to surpass their three-gold medal haul two years ago in Vietnam.

"Anything can happen," Brosas told the INQUIRER. "We will do our best and enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime event. The kids are ready to make the most of it. Cheer for us."

The heats of the individual events will be held starting at 9 a.m. with the finals set at 6 p.m.

Among the crack bets here are 2003 SEAG four-gold medalist Joscelyn Wei Ling Yeo of Singapore and double gold winners Vorathamrong Chonlathorn of Thailand and Lim Keng Hiat of Malaysia.

Yeo is the defending champion in the women's 100-meter freestyle, where she is expected to face Danila, a double SEAG silver medalist, and Heidi Gem Ong.

Danila, the most senior in the RP Team at 26, will also take part in her favorite 200-m backstroke, where she bowed to Chonlathorn two years ago in Vietnam.

Molina, a standout from the University of California at Berkeley, leads the RP men's 400m IM relay.

The 21-year-old Molina, winner of the 200m free in Vietnam, will have his hands full against Singapore's Gary Tan Lee Yu in the absence of defending champion Sirisanont Ratapong of Thailand.

Molina will later return for the defending men's 4x200-meter relay team along with Miguel Mendoza and new members Ronald Guiriba and Ryan Arabejo.

The RP women's team will feature the highly touted Fil-Am Erica Totten, who trained secretly for days outside Trace.

The 17-year-old Totten, who swims for Bolles School in Florida, has surpassed three national marks while competing in the US this year (100-m butterfly, 200-m free and 400-m IM). *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Divers pluck 3 more golds

By Marc Reyes

AQUATICS MEDAL TALLY

Country	G	S	B
Philippines	4	1	1
Malaysia	2	2	3
Singapore	1	0	0
Thailand	0	2	3
Vietnam	0	2	0
Laos	0	0	0
Myanmar	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	0
Timor	0	0	0
Indonesia	0	0	0
Brunei	0	0	0

LOS BAÑOS—THE Philippines found a treasure chest in the diving pool yesterday.

With Filipina diver Shiela Mae Perez once again leading the golden expedition, the country swept all three gold medals at stake in Day 2 of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games diving competitions, doubling their previous haul two years ago and practically claiming the overall title at the Trace Aquatics Center here.

The 19-year-old Perez became the biennial meet's first double gold medalist after ruling the women's 3-meter springboard individual event.

Shiela Mae had earlier won the 3-meter synchronized springboard gold for RP with Ceseil Domenios.

The day auspiciously began with Zardo Domenios and Niño Carog claiming the gold medal in the men's 3-meter synchronized springboard and ended gloriously with the untested pair of Ryan Rexel Fabriga and Kevin Kromwell Kong pulling off a come-from-behind victory in the men's 10-meter synchronized platform.

The Philippines now has four golds and one bronze in diving alone, improving the 2-2-2 finish in Vietnam two years ago with still four events left today and tomorrow.

Perez, who still has a chance for a third gold when she competes tomorrow in the 1-meter springboard, garnered 514.23 points to win the gold decisively over Vietnam's Hoang Thanh Anh.

Hoang took the silver with 461.46 points. Defending champion Supapan Prasertkwan of Thailand, third in the prelims, wound up fourth (420.18) behind Malaysian Leong Mun Yee (456.64).

ZARDO Domenios (left) and Niño Carog show their winning form in men's 3-meter springboard synchronized event. EDWIN BACASMAS

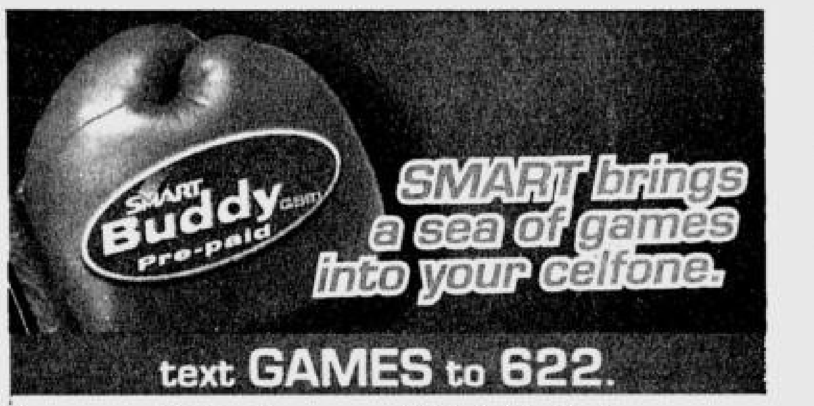
"I wasn't aiming at winning the gold but I set my sights on beating all my rivals," Perez said in Filipino.

Domenios and Carog won with 299.40 points, with the Malaysian pair of individual springboard gold medalist Yeoh Ken Nee and Rossharisham Roslan taking the silver (283.50) and the Thai pair settling for the bronze (278.73).

"We thought the Malaysians would take the gold here because they are ranked higher than us in the world (No. 12 as against RP's No. 14 ranking), *pero sabi ko nga basta tusok na tusok ang pasok sa tubig malaki ang tsansa sa* gold," said RP coach Rommel Kong.

The 19-year-old Carog, son of a porter at the Davao City pier, won the silver in Vietnam.

Carog and the 21-year-old fellow Davaoeño Domenios will again gun for the gold in the 3-meter springboard individual tomorrow. *With a report from Don Eric Sta. Rosa*



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SEA Games Highlights

Keeping a close watch on RP bets

EVEN MALACAÑANG'S TOP OCCUPANT IS KEENLY MONITORING the Philippines' performance in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday commended the Filipino athletes a day after the country claimed the overall lead in the Games' first day with five gold, 5 silver and 4 bronze medals.

"We take this as a good omen as we strive for the overall championship this time on the back of the talent, skill and fighting spirit of the Filipino," said Macapagal-Arroyo in a press statement.

"Let us show to the world that our spirits will never be broken amid political storms and economic constraints and that we are willing to endure the tough national training for a better future just as the hard training of our athletes is now starting to pay off in victory," added Macapagal-Arroyo.

Jasmine W. Payo

FG sheds tears of joy

THAT HUGE FRAME NOTWITHSTANDING, AND AFTER ALL THE political battles he faced, First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo showed his soft spot even in front of a huge crowd.

The husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo wept openly in the stands of the Rizal Memorial Stadium yesterday when Marestella Torres and Lerma Balauitan-Gabito hoisted the RP flag and waived it at his direction after a 1-2 finish in the women's long jump.

"This is such a happy moment for me," said the First Gentleman, wiping away tears with a tissue paper. "*Nakakaiyak talaga* because winning makes you proud to be a Filipino.

Musong R. Castillo

Diay rues successor's absence

THE LAST TIME LYDIA DE VEGA WAS AT THE RIZAL MEMORIAL Stadium during a Southeast Asian Games fortnight was 14 years ago when she was the toast of the Philippine athletics team and the darling of an entire country.

Dressed casually in a white shirt and a pair of straight cut jeans, Asia's former fastest woman Filipinos fondly call "Diay" stood at the stands yesterday, this time cheering Team Philippines as athletics action started in earnest.

"I've been retired for more than 10 years now and there's no clear successor," Diay, still looking fit and charming at 41, added. "Unlike Elma (Muros, her contemporary and many-time SEAG long jump queen), who has two successors, referring to Marestela Torres and Lorna Balauitan-Gabito.

Musong R. Castillo

Politically correct view of SEA Games

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

CAN TIMOR LESTE WIN THE OVERALL championship in the 23rd SEA Games?

No, it can't.

How can it win when it has only 29 athletes, five of them women?

They are 29 and there are 41 disciplines in the Games.

They are 29 and there are 439 gold medals to be contested.

Timor Leste's 29 must be supermen, superwomen, to make them multi-talented athletes.

Each of them must be able to play at least 10 different disciplines for Timor Leste to contend for the overall crown.

That is only in the movies, in a make-believe world.

The valid question then should be: Why is Timor Leste in the 23rd SEA Games?

And the valid answer would be: Because sports is for everybody and not just for first-placers.

If there's anyone who should express gratitude in any sporting event, it is the first placer. Without the second placer, the third placer and so on and so forth, there won't be a first placer.

I have always abhorred the word "winner" in the SEA Games, or any competition for that matter, the Olympics included, in reference to the one who captured the gold medal.

To me, everybody is a winner. That among the winners, there's the first placer, the second placer, the third placer and so on and so forth.

How many among us can endure 12 hours of training on the average almost everyday for 12 months while preparing for a tournament?

Those answering "yes" are all winners, regardless of whether they finish first or last in the competition.

As columnist Sol Juvida of Planet Philippines so correctly observed in her coverage of the dancesport competition in Cebu's Waterfront Hotel on Sunday: "Our victorious bets weren't just graceful on their way to capturing the two gold medals in Latin and standard events. They exhibited power and their sweat strewn all over the dance floor could fill an empty tank! Why, they must have performed for nearly five hours! And just imagine the hours, months, they had spent and endured just preparing for the Games."

In sports, you don't just perform, you kill yourself trying to hit that elusive summit, apex if you will, if only to prove that you deserve to be called a worthy competitor.

Yes, it is not how you finished, but how you played.

You finished last but you gave it your best shot, why, you are already a winner. The first-placer was merely ahead of you, whether by an ant's nose or by a robin's nest, it doesn't matter.

Why do we continue sending athletes to the Olympics when we don't even have an iota of a chance to emerge first placer there, much less capture a gold medal?

While the reason "goodwill among nations" remains valid as ever in rationalizing a "weak" country's participation in the Olympics, bottom line is no athlete gets to the Olympics without having emerged No. 1 in his/her own country.

Let us then applaud not only our own in the ongoing SEA Games, our very own who, this time since the Games' birth in 1959, are finally heavily touted as main contenders for the overall crown.

Let us also cheer our competitors—as much as possible Timor Leste, the sure non-winner—for it is also in applauding that a race, a nation, is gauged on how much it had grown, sportsmanship-wise, in the eyes of its neighbors.

Even in this area alone, let us not disappoint.

***

E-mail: menju@pldtdsl.net

Sepak takraw teams advance

CEBU CITY—THE PHILIPPINE SEPAK takraw hoop event athletes did not disappoint the throng of supporters, who filled the University of San Carlos gym to the rafters yesterday.

Egged on by the raucous crowd, the women's team emerged the number one seed in the crossover semifinal round after topping the elimination round with 510 points.

Interestingly, the men's team also scored 510 points and settled for a shaky fourth place finish.

Playing in a 30-minute battle with each basket equivalent to 10 points, the women's squad was razor sharp behind Irene Apdon, Rhea Padrigo, and Gelyn Evora who all scored 110 points.

Team skipper Desiree Autor added 100 points while Sarah Catain had 80.

"I was impressed with their performance and when we continue to play like this tomorrow (today) we stand a good chance of winning gold," said head coach Camilo Apdon.

In contrast, men's coach Rodolfo Eco said his wards played below expectations. *Calvin Cordova, Cebu Daily News*

Bad break denies Llorito pistol gold

By Jasmine W. Payo

BEGINNER'S LUCK CERTAINLY DESERTED rookie shooter Marly Llorito.

Absorbing a huge penalty after her pistol jammed, Llorito settled for the silver medal in the women's practical pistol event of the shooting competition of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the PSC-PNSA Shooting Range at Fort Bonifacio.

It was a disappointing opener for the RP shooting team.

Anna Maria Gana was the only other medalist in four events after securing a bronze in the women's trap event.

Llorito, a member of the Philippine Navy, was slapped with a 60-point penalty after failing to fire the needed six shots from the 10-meter range.

"*Kayang-kaya sana* (I could have done it)," said Llorito, who finished with 803 points, seven points shy of the 810-point total of gold medalist Phaviga Thansuk of Thailand.

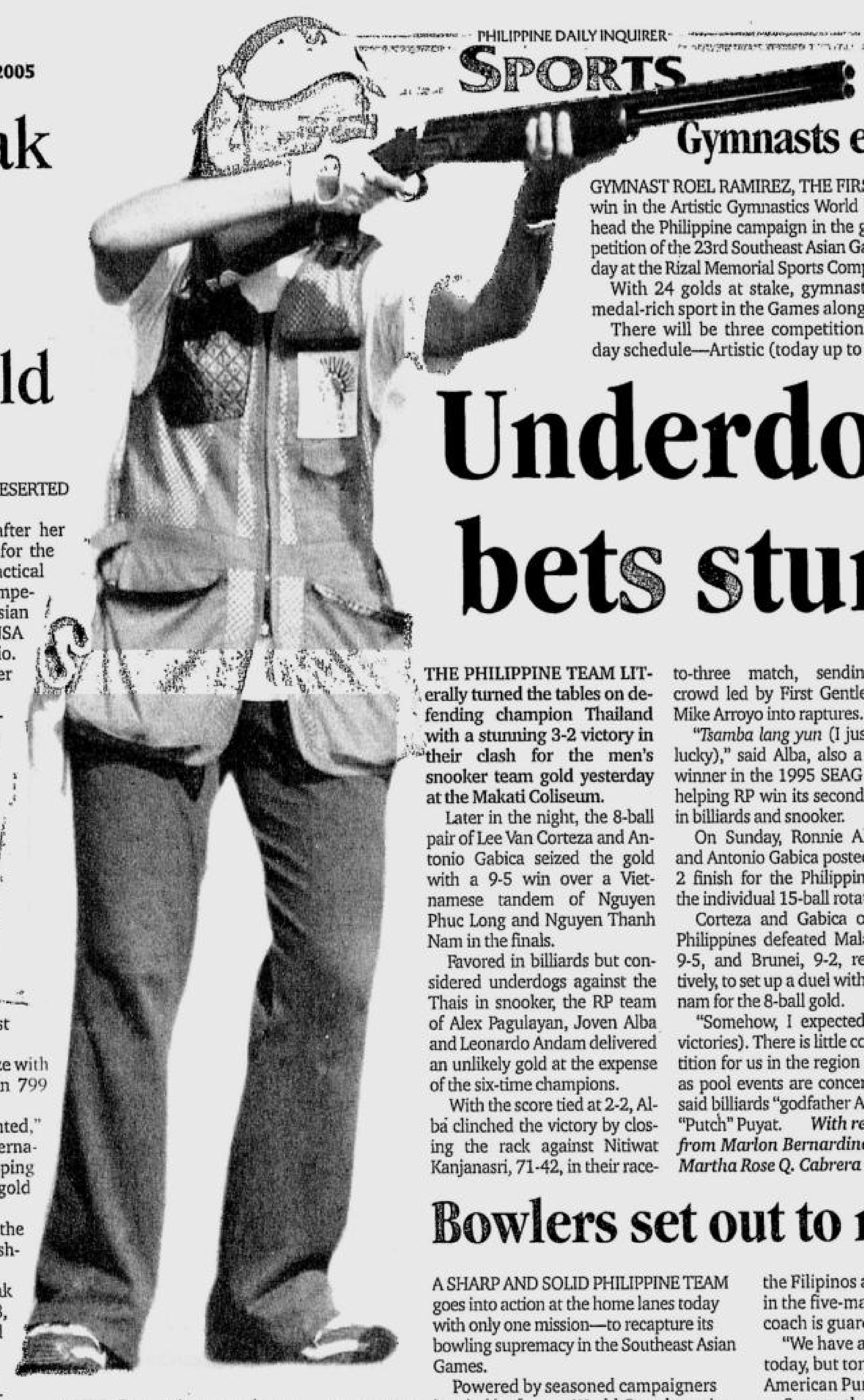
Thailand also took the bronze with Pyathida Aroonsakul raking in 799 points.

"I am very, very disappointed," said Llorito after her first international competition. "I was hoping to contribute to the country's gold medal haul."

Thailand also dominated the women's trap, with Gana finishing with third-best 76 points.

Supawan Karjaejuntasak captured the gold with 88, while N. Viravaidya clinched the silver with 79 points.

Gana absorbed a big setback in the second stage, finishing last with only 15 points.



GANA: Bronze in women's trap EGAY MONTANA

Gymnasts eye more than 2 golds this time

GYMNAST ROEL RAMIREZ, THE FIRST FILIPINO TO win in the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup, will spearhead the Philippine campaign in the gymnastics competition of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games starting today at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

With 24 golds at stake, gymnastics is the third medal-rich sport in the Games along with shooting.

There will be three competitions in the seven-day schedule—Artistic (today up to Dec. 1), Rhythmic (Dec 2 to 4) and Aerobics (Dec. 5).

Ramirez will be competing in the Artistic men's team event at 3:40 p.m. today.

"I don't want to say that it's a sure thing," said Ramirez, who bagged a silver medal in the men's vault in the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup in New York last February.

Malaysia ruled the 2003 Vietnam Games with a 9-8-4 gold-silver-bronze tally. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Underdog snooker bets stun Thailand

THE PHILIPPINE TEAM LITerally turned the tables on defending champion Thailand with a stunning 3-2 victory in their clash for the men's snooker team gold yesterday at the Makati Coliseum.

Later in the night, the 8-ball pair of Lee Van Corteza and Antonio Gabica seized the gold with a 9-5 win over a Vietnamese tandem of Nguyen Phuc Long and Nguyen Thanh Nam in the finals.

Favored in billiards but considered underdogs against the Thais in snooker, the RP team of Alex Pagulayan, Joven Alba and Leonardo Andam delivered an unlikely gold at the expense of the six-time champions.

With the score tied at 2-2, Alba clinched the victory by closing the rack against Nitiwat Kanjanasri, 71-42, in their race-to-three match, sending a crowd led by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo into raptures.

"*Tsamba lang yun* (I just got lucky)," said Alba, also a gold winner in the 1995 SEAG after helping RP win its second gold in billiards and snooker.

On Sunday, Ronnie Alcano and Antonio Gabica posted a 1-2 finish for the Philippines in the individual 15-ball rotation.

Corteza and Gabica of the Philippines defeated Malaysia, 9-5, and Brunei, 9-2, respectively, to set up a duel with Vietnam for the 8-ball gold.

"Somehow, I expected (the victories). There is little competition for us in the region as far as pool events are concerned," said billiards "godfather Aristeo "Putch" Puyat. *With reports from Marlon Bernardino and Martha Rose Q. Cabrera*

ALEX Pagulayan and Joven Alba celebrate the team gold. RUDY ESPERAS

Protests galore, as usual, in sailing

SUBIC BAY, OLONGAPO CITY—SAILING ACTION IN THE 23RD Southeast Asian Games unfolded yesterday at the Subic Bay Yacht Club here, and, as expected, results could not be released immediately. Numerous protests were filed by the participating countries, in the process stalling the release of the results. "These are pretty common in sailing," said Singaporean manager Andrew Sandars of the protests. "We've filed a few." RP coach Medy Pidel could not provide details on the complaints. The RP team was preparing for the hearing of the complaints. *Jose Paolo Lacdao*

Bowlers set out to regain SEA Games glory

A SHARP AND SOLID PHILIPPINE TEAM goes into action at the home lanes today with only one mission—to recapture its bowling supremacy in the Southeast Asian Games.

Powered by seasoned campaigners headed by former World Cup champion CJ Suarez, the Filipinos will be trying to convert their familiarity with the Pearl Bowling Center in Parañaque into gold medals with the revival of bowling competition in the biennial regional meet.

On tap today are the six-game men's and women's singles. A total of 10 gold medals are at stake in both men's and women's divisions.

But while everyone else is pointing to the Filipinos as the favorites, especially in the five-man and -woman teams, their coach is guarded on his team's chances.

"We have a solid team. We look good today, but tomorrow is another day," American Purvis Granger said yesterday.

Suarez, the World Cup champion in 2003, is more optimistic of the team's prospects.

"Anyone in the competition is capable of winning the singles, but we have a very deep team. We have very great chances from the doubles to the trios and the five-man teams," Suarez said. The team, which he considers the strongest since 1991, is a good combination of "experience and skills."

Backing up Suarez in the team are World Cup qualifier Tyrone Ongpauco, Chester King, Engleberto "Biboy" Rivera, Ernesto Gatchialian and Markwin Tee.

King points to Malaysia and Thailand as RP's biggest threat in the men's division and Malaysia in the women's play.

The women's team is spearheaded by Liza del Rosario. She is backed up by Jojo Canare, Liza Clutario, Elaine Florencio, Irene Garcia and Cecil Yap.

Four-time World Cup champion and 12-time SEA Games gold medallist Paeng Nepomuceno considers everyone in in the Philippine team capable of winning a gold medal. He describes the delegation as "really strong." Jun Engracia

Volleybelles notch second win against Indonesians

By Christian Irl Tan, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

BACOLOD CITY—THE PHILIPPINE women's indoor volleyball squad needed the spark of a Negrense standout and precise offensive execution down the stretch to nail its second victory yesterday in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games here.

Maureen Penetrante of Silay City registered 6 points to provide the final boost as the RP volleybelles outlasted Indonesia, 25-18, 22-25, 25-20, 25-19, in a match that lasted a little more than two hours at the jampacked West Negros College Gymnasium here.

Defending women's champion Thailand showed superb form by sweeping past Vietnam, 25-16, 25-20, 27-25.

Indonesia and Burma (Myanmar) were playing at presstime in the men's category.

Penetrante, who did not get the chance to play in the nationals' triumph over Singapore Sunday, was inserted early in the third set with the lady spikers trailing at 8-10.

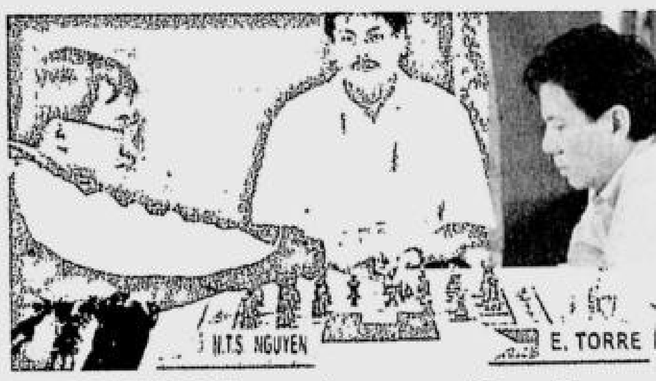
The Silaynon, who is coming off from a career-threatening right knee injury, made two prolific serves to tie the score at 10 in the third set, before the nationals outscored the Indons, 15-10, to put the third set in the bag.

"Again it was our good blocking. Nakabawi sila sa second set, but I never doubted my players," RP coach Ramil de Jesus said.

Michelle Carolino amassed 18 points to spearhead the RP volleybelles, who seized the top spot in the five-team tournament with a 2-0 slate.

"This win is very important because this is only a single round robin event and we need to win each game," Carolino said.

Torre blunders away rapid chess title bid



VIETNAM'S N.T.S. Nguyen takes measure of Eugene Torre. JESS YUSON

TAGAYTAY CITY—THERE GOES THE rapid chess gold.

Grandmaster Eugene Torre bowed to Viet GM Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, 0.5-1.5, to dash Filipino hope in the individual rapid chess event of the Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the Tagaytay International Convention Center.

The 54-year-old Torre blundered in the end game of their semifinal match, allowing his 16-year-old foe to seize the initiative. Nguyen proceeded to win the title at the expense of GM Susanto Megaranto of Indonesia.

Megaranto edged IM Jason Goh of Singapore, 2.5-1.5, in the other semifinal.

Torre gets a chance to redeem himself when he joins Antonio, GM Nelson Mariano II and IMs Petronio Roca and Barlo Nadera in the rapid team event which begins today. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

SPORTSWATCH

ABC Sports airs volleyball action 'live'

ABC SPORTS WILL AIR THE WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COMPETITIONS OF the 23rd Southeast Asian Games today at 9 in the morning, right after a replay of yesterday's highlights at 8 a.m. The lead broadcaster of the biennial meet will also show the badminton competitions at 5 p.m., before airing the boxing matches at 8.

QC to host biggest sports climbing event

THE QUEZON CITY SPORTS COUNCIL WILL HOST THE FIRST QC INTERnational Climbing Open on Dec. 1 to 4 at the Amoranto Sports Complex. The four-day event, which coincides with 23rd Manila Southeast Asian Games and is held through the Office of Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, is the country's biggest with close to 100 college-based, pre-qualified competitors and the cream of the region's climbers seeing action. The Philippine team will be bannered by Miel Pahati, winner of the Malaysian leg of the Southeast Asian Circuit in Genting Highlands. Pahati also placed fourth in the recent ESPN Asian X Games, behind climbers from traditional powerhouse squads Japan and Korea. To add to the thrill, skateboarding and BMX competitions will also be held, featuring RP's best extreme athletes. The QC International Climbing Open is also supported by Lactovitale, Activade and Timex.

Cavite International Derby kicks off today

THE MUCH-AWAITED CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONal cockers unfolds at 4 p.m. today in the Cavite 7-Cock International Derby at the Cavite Coliseum Derby Center and Casino. Bannering the foreign contingent are Rep. Benjamin Sablan of Saipan, Rene Azucena of Tenessee, Conrad Burgos of California, Riochi Saito of Japan, Li Ong of Malaysia and Thomas Michauz of Germany. More than 100 fights are on tap in today's 2-cock elimination round, according to derby hosts former Sen. Ramon Revilla, Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza, Makati Vice Mayor Nestor Mercado and William Co. For inquiries, call 0915-5742399 or (046) 970-4810.

Makati Coliseum derby stakes P3M, Innova

THE WTJ SPORTS AND AMUSEMENT CORP. HAS PUT UP A CASH POT OF P3 million and a brand new Toyota Innova in the upcoming "Pamaskong Salpukan 6-Cock Derby" slated Dec. 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 28 at the Makati Coliseum. Entry fee in the seven-day derby is P11,000. Three-cock elimination rounds are scheduled on Dec. 12, 14, 17, 19 and 21 with participants scoring 1.5, 2 and 2.5 points figuring in a face-off on Dec. 26. The 3-pointers collide on Dec. 28. No less than 100 fights will be staged each day, according to the organizers. Tickets are available on a "buy one, take one" promo. Reservation of cockhouses is ongoing. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

Old enemies come together for sports

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE LAST TIME THIS POLICE general looked, he was the sworn enemy, the rebel whose organization sought to carve a separate homeland in Southern Philippines.

The other day, however, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao and Moro Islamic Liberation Front spokesperson Eid Kabalu shook hands during the opening ceremonies of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

They exchanged pleasantries and briefly chatted, for the first time. It was an enlightening experience for Lomibao.

"It was a sight to behold," Lomibao described his fleeting meeting with Kabalu and several other MILF officials.

"Before, the MILF and the government were at loggerheads. Now they're in one venue, shaking hands. You could see there is hope for peace through sports."

The MILF, a group that broke away from the Moro National Liberation Front in the 1970s, is now in talks with the government. Up until the early 2000s, MILF rebels and government troops were exchanging fire and heavy artillery.

The enemies started talking again, and perhaps as a gesture signifying good intentions, the Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee, through its president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco invited the MILF to the SEAG rites.

Lomibao noted that sports is a non-partisan activity. "Even friends or foes can be together and play in one playing field," he said.

It was the first time that Lomibao saw Kabalu in person.

MILF official Eid Kabalu (left), accompanied by an MILF general, exchange pleasantries with PNP chief Arturo Lomibao. LYN RILLON

Early exit for overmatched Filipino shuttlers

SHUTOUT LOSSES MARKED THE ELIMINATION of the Philippines in both divisions of the badminton team competiton in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

The RP women shuttlers took a 5-0 drubbing from powerhouse Indonesia and the national men's team event suffered the same 5-0 fate against Thailand.

The Filipino girls were definitely not in the class of their rivals.

Paula Obañana lost to a much taller Adrianti Firdasari, ranked 36th in the world, 11-0, 11-3. Irene Chiu scored only a point in the second set against Fransisca Ratnasari and Vanessa Tanco had only a point in each set against Maria Kristin.

In the doubles, the tandem of Jo Novita and Greysia Polii somewhat struggled before beating Kennie Asuncion and Obañana, 15-7, 15-3 but Lita Nurlita and Kristin were too powerful for Chiu and Tanco, 15-0, 15-1.

It was almost as lopsided in the men's division with crowd favorite Kennevic Asuncion offering the toughest losing stand to world No. 13. Boonsak Ponsana, 15-6, 15-9, in the first singles.

Poompat Supkulchananart routed Lloyd Escoses, 15-5, 15-1 and Jackaphan Thanateeratam crushed Rodel Bartolome, 15-4, 15-1.

Sudket Prapakamol and Phatapol Ngensrisuk whipped Ian Piencenaves and 15-6, 15-6 in the doubles while Songphol Anukritayawan and Nitipong Saengsila downed Jaime Junio and Mark Natividad, 15-9, 15-7. *Reuben Ezra Terrado*

SPORTS

Paragua stuns Slovak GM

FILIPINO GRANDMASTER MARK Paragua stunned Super GM Sergei Movsesian of Slovakia late Monday to reach the last 64 of the 2005 World Chess Cup at the Khanty-Mansyik, West Siberia, Russia.

Paragua, the most bemedalled Philippine athlete in the 2003 SEA Games with three golds, handled the white pieces and won after 41 moves of a Slav Defense.

The 21-year-old Paragua and Movsesian (Elo 2635) drew their first match late Sunday.

Paragua is likely to face Russian Super GM Alexey Dreev (Elo 2694), who's leading IM Pascual Charbonneau of Canada in their mini-match, 1-0.

Dreev beat Charbonneau after 76 moves of a Caro-Kann Defense in the first game. Charbonneau needs to win in Game 2 to force a playoff.

The tournament, which drew 113 GMs, takes a break Tuesday.

During his debut in the event previously known as the World Chess Championship, Paragua won the first match against GM Victor Bologan of Moldova, but lost the second when he opted to play defensively. He yielded to Bologan in the playoffs.

Paragua's participation is being supported by long-time benefactor Filway Marketings Inc. CEO/President Hector "Chito" Tagaysay. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Nets thwart Kobe's 46-point effort

LOS ANGELES—KOBE BRYANT HAD another big second half on Sunday, but overtime belonged to Jason Kidd and the New Jersey Nets.

Bryant scored 39 of his NBA season-high 46 points in the second half, but Kidd countered with his own season-best 35 points as the Nets downed the Los Angeles Lakers 102-96.

Bryant on Thursday scored 29 of his 34 points after halftime to lead the Lakers' comeback win over Seattle. The league's leading scorer poured in 10 points in the final 1:32 of regulation, but it was Brian Cook's short jumper at the buzzer that sent the game into overtime tied at 91-91. *AFP*

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Capitol seniors still way ahead

BAGUIO CITY—CAPITOL HILLS MANAGED only 73 points yesterday but remained 15 points ahead of defending champion Baguio Country Club Centennial in Fil Division Flight B after two rounds of the second Fil-Am Seniors' Invitational here.

Counting their first round effort of 92 at the par-61, 4,038-yard BCC course, Capitol Hills posted a 36-hole aggregate of 165 and well ahead of its rivals in the event backed by Smart, Wilson Sports, Eva Air and Club Leisure as major sponsors.

The Centennials, already 20 points behind after a measly start of 72, gained ground with a 78 for a 150 total. Philippine Golf Club of Chicago matched the Centennials' round to remain in contention at 148.

Chamorro came up with its best effort of 98 to go with its earlier 88 and 86 at the par 69, 5,006-yard Camp John Hay Golf Club to virtually capture the Flight D diadem in the regular Fil Division with 272.

The 320 Golf Club made a 93 and was a far second at 256, followed by City Mortgage of Hawaii with 86-244, Isabela Golf Club 70-243, Stallion GC 88-231, JJ Golf Team 87-217 and Sustagen Premium I 76-205.

The battle for the seniors' Am Division Flight D title remained tight among Fil-Hawaiian, Cabana and Green Water Meadows.

The Fil-Hawaiian campaigners played the John Hay layout with a 69. With its earlier 78, they have 147 to lead Cabana by five after a 64-142 and Green Water by seven after a 66-134.

Rural Bankers Golf Association of the Philippines matched its first round 80 to go with 91 for 251 and a commanding 21-point lead over Capitol Hills (70-230) in the regular Am Division Flight D.

Crystal Dew Bottling Corp. (63-222) followed the leaders, Chamorro (61-221), Bataan Societe De Golpe (74-219) and Windy City of Chicago (62-214).

Frank Cruz and Bill Payne paced Chamorro with 28 points via the Stableford scoring system. Mel Corpuz contributed 24 and John Quinata added 18. Frunie Franco starred for Capitol Hills in the seniors Flight B battle with 22, followed by Ed Magnabihon 22, Roger Santander 17 and Eton Roman 15.

PRESIDENTIAL GOLD CUP: Top officials of the organizing Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) led by chair Sergio Valencia and GM Rosario Uriarte (seated, third and fourth from left), Philracom chair Jaime Dilag (second from left) and Manila Jockey club Inc. EVP and COO Alfonso "King" Reyno III (fifth from left) formalize arrangements for the staging of the 33rd PCSO Presidential Gold Cup Race on Dec. 11, at the San Lazaro Leisure Park. Witnesses to the formal signing of the agreement were (seated from left) MJCI director Martin Cepeda and PCSO directors Teresita Gonzalez and Victor Domingo with (standing from left) event officials Carlos Castillo, Reynaldo Empremiado, Manuel Garcia, Jose Malang, Conrado Zabella, Henri Kahn, Israel Estrella, Betsy Paruginog and Carlo Mendez.

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Race 6—1. Bunker Buster 2. Sanry Forex 3. American Music 4. Stingray
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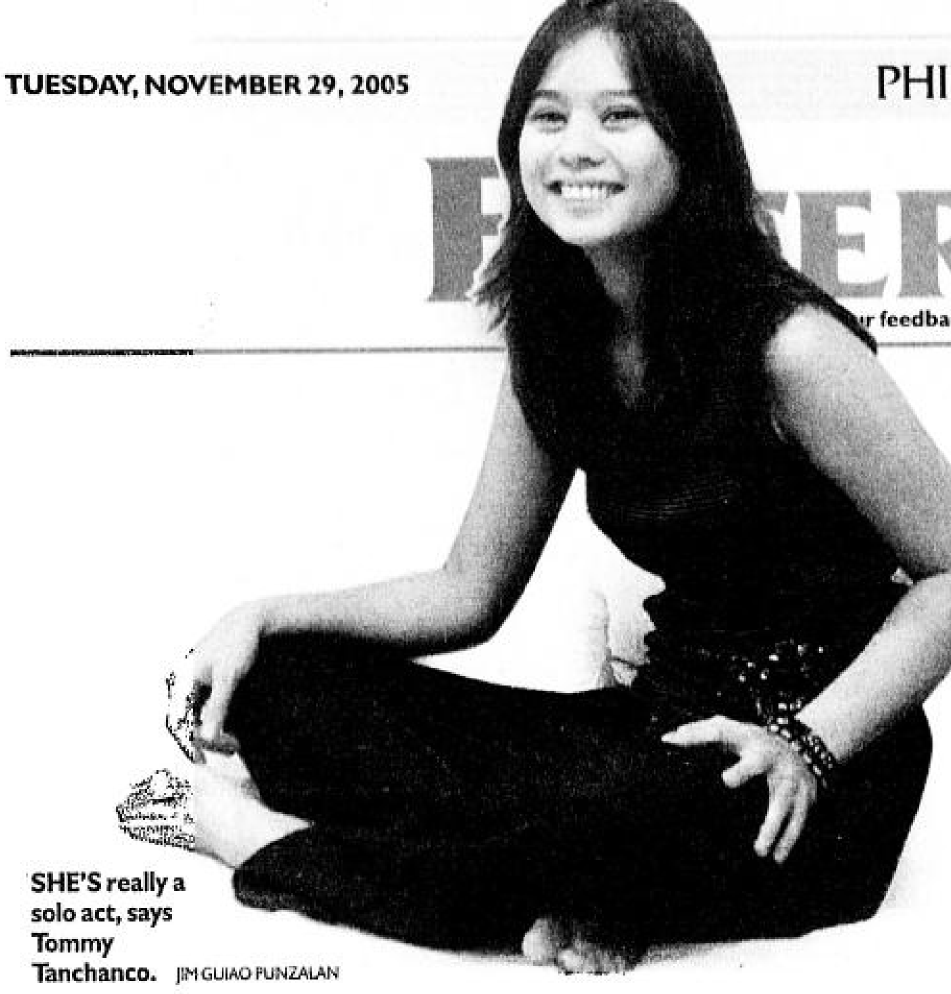


SHE'S really a solo act, says Tommy Tanchanco. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Kitchie's manager speaks up

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

AS PROMISED, HERE'S **KITCHIE NADAL'S** side in the issue I raised in my previous columns about her former band mates (**Jeff, Marco and Aaron**) being left in the dark as soon as Kitchie's star began to rise. I am printing her manager's (**Tommy Tanchanco**) e-mail. Hopefully this will put Kitchie and the three *musikeros* on the "Same Ground" just as the title of her hit song goes...

Hi Dolly!

Thank you for giving us a chance to air our side. To be honest with you our initial plan was just to keep silent about the issue but some of our advisers in the industry suggested that we reply. The only thing we can say is, Kitchie Nadal is really a solo artist that's being backed up by session musicians. Session musicians can just play with any artist with a standard TF (talent fee)... no exclusivity (agreement). Any transition that happened was done only for the betterment of the artist and, in the long run, even for the session artists.

As for "Bulong," the song was written by Kitchie, Jeff and Marco. On the issue of going back to school, she's now enrolled at De La Salle University—double major in Education and Psychology—and she has more than a year to go.

There was time when we stopped accepting gigs because we were not sure of her school schedule. This even started a rumor that she was quitting her singing career altogether. Only after she got her school sked were we able to accept gigs again, but usually just on weekends. As for Kitchie's former backup band, they are great musicians. The reason for the changes was incompatibility, more than anything. We hope this would put an end to the issue so we can move forward to play better Original Pilipino Music.

Tommy Tanchanco

Band's bond

AS a footnote to the issue, I heard that Jeff and Marco have joined **Epy Quizon**'s band, "Makata." Aaron is still forming his own group. My source insists: "They were promised that they would be Kitchie's permanent band. They don't consider themselves session musicians. The thing is, *wala silang* contract. Everything was verbal. It's sad 'cause they all worked hard for the album but when it hit platinum sales, they were dumped. When Kitchie was still starting, the band would even play for free. She may have valid reasons for what happened, but you can't blame the guys for feeling disgusted."

Too bad Kitchie's bond with her band was not solid after all.

Just asking

COULD it be true that some of the Miss Earth candidates who stayed behind are being "offered" to politicos and big actors for pleasure, more than business? Only heaven knows!

Is it true that **Angelica Panganiban** is fast becoming a pain for some of the people that she works with? To quote an insider, "Feeling *niya*, diva *siya* and that she's already made as an actress. Truth to tell, she still has a lot to prove, acting wise." So is Angelica an angel no more?

How true is it that some ABS-CBN bigwigs are appalled with **Franzen Fajardo**'s brazen ways, so much so that his guest appearances in some shows have been canceled? There's one in every family. Is Franzen the "Kapamilya's" prodigal son? But will the black sheep turn out to be the dark horse in the long run?

'Close Up to Film'

WANT to join **Bea Alonso, John Lloyd Cruz**, Close Up model and **Sam Milby** in the very first Close Up movie?

Close Up to Fame's winners **Carine Cabebe** and **Reyson Yap** smiled, got discovered and are now starring in the new ad, "Close Up to Film." Now, not just 24, but 100 candidates have a chance to be with their favorite teen stars in a full length feature movie. No less than Star Cinema is set to produce the movie scheduled for release on Valentine's Day 2006.

KITCHIE'S/ A2-2

Gov't radio balks at all-OPM plan

By Marinel R. Cruz

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

"HAD THIS RECommendation come from somebody else, nobody would mind. But because it comes from Vic del Rosario, who has his own record company, the motive becomes suspect."

This was the reaction of broadcast journalist Vic Milan to news that Del Rosario, Viva Entertainment Inc. head and presidential adviser on entertainment, is involved in the planned conversion of the government-owned dwBR into an all-OPM radio station.

Milan, an environmental activist, produces and hosts a nightly show on dwBR 104.3 titled "Kalikasan Vigilante."

"That was what I read in the newspaper," said Milan in an exclusive interview on Saturday.

Milan was referring to a news article that said Del Rosario was set to work with Government Mass Media Group head Cerge Remonde to transform dzBR, known for airing American ballads or standards, into an all-OPM (Original Pilipino Music) station.

No movement ... yet

"Right now, there is no movement in the station. But we don't want to wake up one morning and discover that the station we love is no longer there," Milan said.

Milan said dwBR station manager Artemio Ruiz Jr., in a letter dated Nov. 16, asked for the help of producers like himself to "try to stop the killing of an institution."

Also known as Business Radio, dwBR is one of five radio stations of the Philippine Broadcasting Service, official radio broadcast arm of the government. The station plays jazz standards, as well as classical, Broadway and OPM contemporary music.

"We heard that the transfer of (all dwBR) programs to other government-owned stations would start in December and that, on Jan. 15, the station would be shut down for the installation of new equipment," said the veteran radio host.

Milan showed to INQUIRER Entertainment documents that, he said, were sent by Ruiz.

In Nov. 16 letter, Ruiz wrote: "Remonde plans to turn dwBR into an all-Pilipino station... We think the whole idea sucks."

Another letter that contained the dwBR timetable stated that the "inventory of existing studio transmitter and equipment" was scheduled from Sept. 1 to 7 this year. "Migration of existing FM programs to AM" was supposed to have taken place from Sept. 8 to 10. The new station, Radyo ng Pilipino, was to have initially aired on Sept. 18.

Del Rosario became presidential adviser in May.

"Everything was put on hold because Ruiz wrote to Remonde, appealing for a reconsideration," Milan explained. "The letter (timetable) was not a formal memorandum ... but Ruiz said Remonde's office was ready to implement the plan."

Milan co-hosts the eight-year-old "Kalikasan Vigilante" with Emily Marcelo.

"The impending change jolted us," said Milan. "I'm not doing this just to save my program. I want to save dwBR. When Emily and I discussed this on our program, the listeners' reaction was overwhelming."

According to Milan, there is also a plan for Radyo ng Pilipino to broadcast over the Internet, to reach Filipinos abroad.

"Ruiz said he heard about this when he started researching and calling people," Milan said. "The plan is good. But let us please not sacrifice a 26-year-old institution for that."

Other voices sought

Milan said he and another radio host, Jo San Diego, planned to meet with Remonde soon to discuss the issue. "But first we would like to hear the sentiments of the [other dwBR hosts] like veterans Lito Gorospe and Bong Lapira," said Milan.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, Milan's group threw a party for dwBR staff members and supporters in Quezon City.

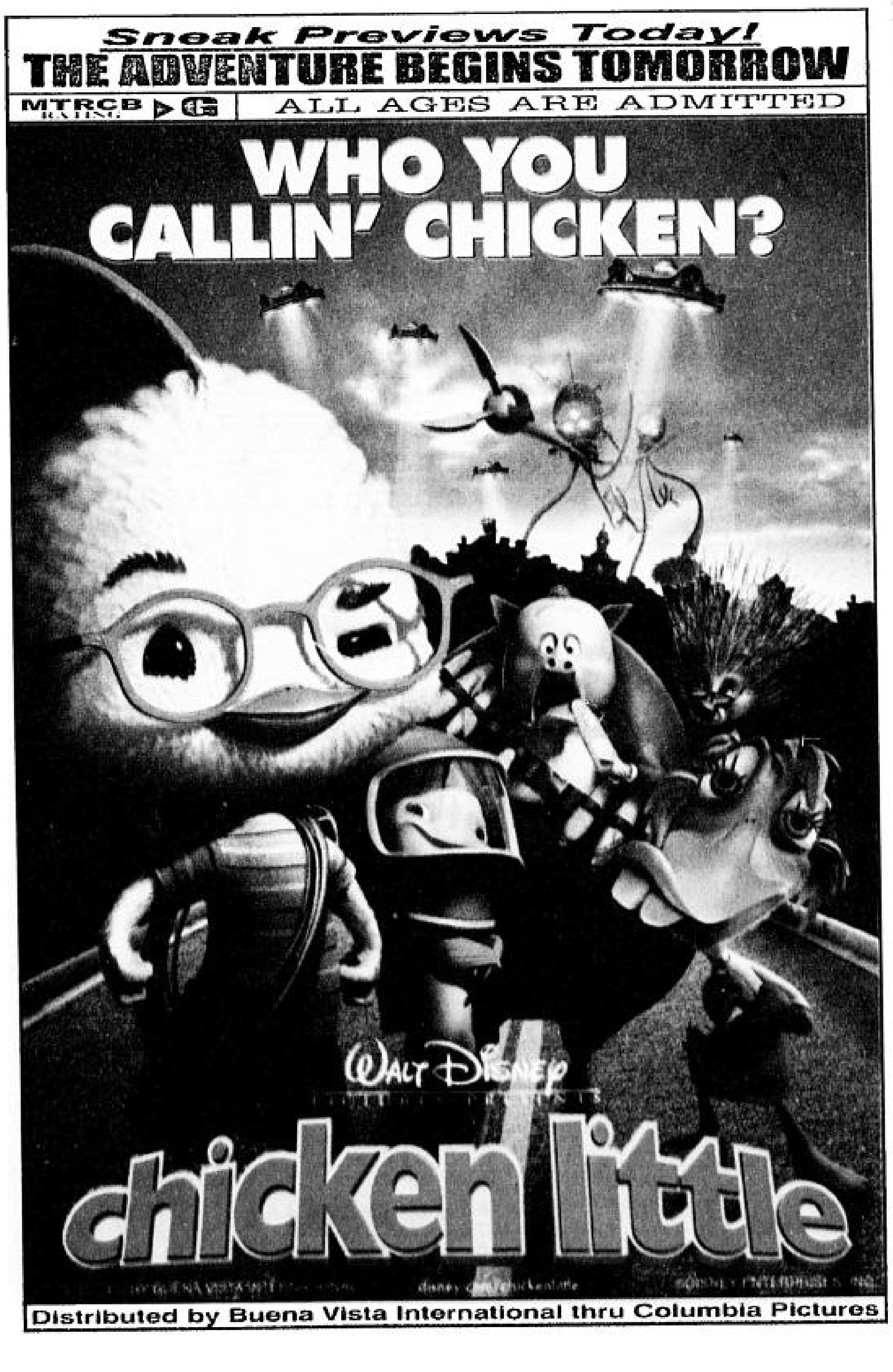
Del Rosario, in his latest report to Malacañang, recommended that a new Executive Order supersede EO 255, which requires all radio stations to broadcast a minimum of four original Pilipino recording every hour. The new EO should provide stiffer penalties, said the presidential adviser.

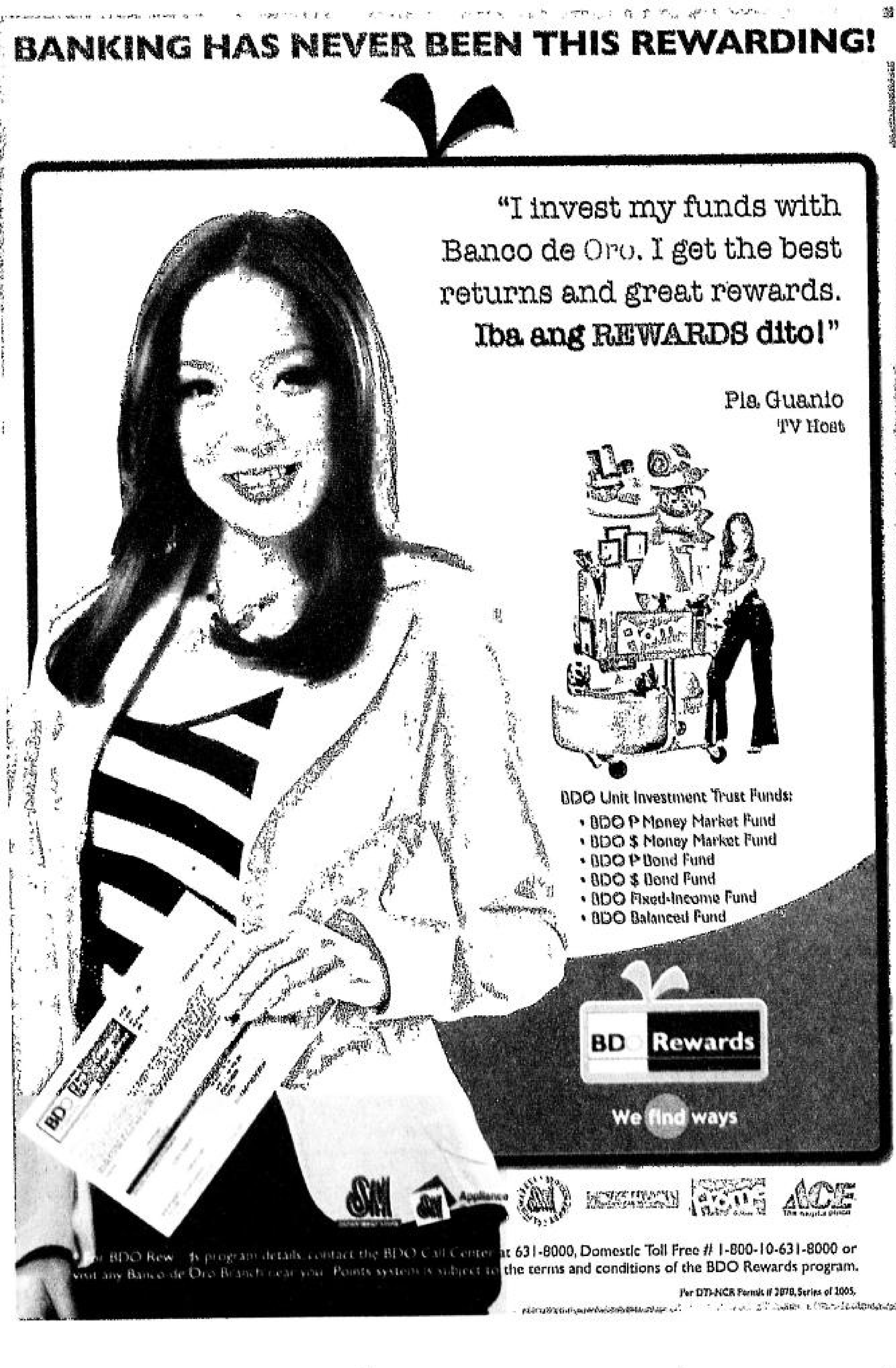
Del Rosario also proposed a five-year tax holiday for digital films, the exemption from amusement taxes of local movies and film-related raw materials and equipment, as well as tax breaks for the Cebu-based international production company, Big Foot Entertainment, by way of exemption from import taxes and duties on film equipment.

Milan added: "Del Rosario is one of the biggest record producers of OPM. [With Radyo ng Pilipino] he [would have] a radio station that could play his records for 24 hours. We weren't born yesterday."

DID YOU KNOW...

Piolo Pascual has reportedly been walking on eggshells in his home studio, ABS-CBN, after he got on the bad side of **Charo Santos-Concio**, executive vice president in charge of Entertainment. An insider said Concio was irked when the actor flew to Cannes, France, earlier this year and missed a taping for "Maalaala Mo Kaya." **Marvin Agustin** took over the role. Even if Piolo is a mainstay on the Sunday noontime variety show, "ASAP," he has not had a major project with the network's Star Cinema since "Dream Boy" was shown in February.

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John Lapus: Good humor and guts

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

COMIC JOHN LAPUS ADMITS HE IS OVERflowing with self-confidence.

His pluck is his most valuable gift as a performer, he says, and it has quite literally taken him places.

He recently headlined a string of shows in the United States. On his return, he was signed up by ABC 5 to host its Saturday night show biz game show, "Blind Item."

Fridays and Saturdays of November, he topbilled "Ang Gandah!"—a back-to-back show in Zirkoh Quezon City with stand-up comedy idol Jon Santos.

"Bargain basement Jon Santos," John used to call himself with a mixture of self-deprecation and self-assurance.

In spite of his chutzpah, he still gets a fair share of ego-shattering intrigues. Case in point: A write-up insinuated he flunked an audition for a QTV 11 show.

Understandably, that rumor agitated John—who handled it with good humor ... and guts.

Is it OK with your home network ABS-CBN that you now have a show with ABC 5?

Of course! Although I am a talent of ABS-CBN's Star Magic, management allowed me to accept ABC's offer.

Are other ABS-CBN talents joining you?

On "Blind Item," I have two co-hosts, Cherry Lou and Jenny Miller, my sisters from Star Magic. We needed sexy girls because we come before PBA.

Speaking of network-hopping, there was a rumor you auditioned for a QTV 11 show (which is under ABS-CBN's top rival, GMA 7)?

And that I was not accepted! That's not true. This is what happened: QTV called up Star Magic and asked if I had an existing contract with ABS. Star Magic told them I didn't have a show with ABS. So QTV asked Star Magic to send my résumé. That was it. Nothing more came out of it. Anyway, I know that, had I auditioned, I would've surely landed the part because I'm good!

QTV is perfect for you because it targets women.

Precisely!

What's the source of your self-confidence?

I think it's a gay person's best weapon because he is bound to encounter discrimination at home, in the workplace, and from society as a whole. It's that simple. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether you're a boy, girl, *bakla* or tomboy; it all boils down to your God-given talent and self-confidence.

You used to call yourself the *baratillo* (bargain-basement) Jon Santos?

Hahaha! *'Sing galing pero di 'sing mahal!* (Just as good, but not as expensive!) That's why doing the show with Jon was such an honor!

What was it like working with Jon?

Ang gandah! (Beautiful!) Our producer, Pops Fernandez, hit the target audience. Jon brought in the A-B crowd. I attracted the C-D!

Which characters that you played with Jon were your favorites?

We changed our sketches every week. In the first week, we had Tita Midz and Madam Auring. Our finale was the showdown of Kuring and Krissy. For our opening, we played two gorgeous cheerleaders: Verna and Viring. Verna was from Assumption and Viring was from Asamson Tech. I was Viring, of course!

Will you ever give up stand-up comedy?

No! It's in my blood!

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Kitchie's manager speaks...

From page A2-1

It's so easy to join—just text in the number found on any Close Up pack to 2955 (for SMART and Globe subscribers). Winners will be drawn from entries nationwide and cast immediately in the first Close Up movie. Deadline for entries is Dec. 5, 2005.

Privilege card

I HAVE always been a "Cinderella" loyalist. Kudos to the fashion specialty store, especially to my "immortal friend," **Richie Coronel Santos**, for the forthcoming launch of EPC (Esprit Privilege Card) at their newest Esprit store in SM Mega A tomorrow. Enjoy 15 percent discounts on that day only. The branch features the collections of **Kate Torralba, Tippi Ocampo, LZ Punzalan, R. Mata & Irene Pineda**. Cocktails at 6 p.m. See ya there.

Congrats to my "uragon" bud, **Alan Rañola**, on the fourth anniversary of his McDonald's branch in Pacific Mall (Legazpi City). As part of the celebration, catch **Nina** and **Nyoy Volante** in "A coustic Soul" tomorrow at the Albay Astrodome.

SEA Games Opening

"ANG Banda ng Bayan" Rivermaya and "The Music Man" **Ryan Cayabyab** made the SEA Games 2005 opening ceremonies an unforgettable musical experience. "It was the first time ever that a full-piece orchestra was fused with rock music on such an immense scale," Ryan beamed. Rivermaya performed its chart busters—"Awit ng Kabataan," "Alab ng Puso" and the new mega hit "Posible" *gratis et amore* in support of Pinoy athletes. Ryan adds: "We did not spend as much as the other countries but we showed them talent with a capital T. On center stage that day was the artistry and originality of Pilipino music."

FOR FEEDBACK E-MAIL wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com

Precious treats from 3 icons of our generation

By Anna Leah Sarabia

REVIEW

BARBRA Streisand

NOVEMBER GAVE AN ENtertainment treat to post-baby boom women in Manila, with the release of new works by three icons of our generation: Jodie Foster's "Flightplan," Carly Simon's "Moonlight Serenade" and Barbra Streisand's "Guilty Pleasures."

It has been a while since Foster last displayed her awesome talents. Suspense and non-traditional roles—characters who remain steadfast in a world that readily doubts the word and knowledge of women—are her film's distinction. It is in this sense that, with "Flightplan," Foster does not disappoint. Her absolute command of facial and vocal expressions keeps the audience from getting lost in the belly of the jumbo jet in which the entire film takes place. A two-time Academy Awardee, Foster's latest work is only her third in the last 10 years.

In contrast, the multi-talented Streisand seems to enjoy filling up each year with at least one major project. Her most recent movie role was as an accomplished senior sexologist in a family comedy, "Meet the Fockers," released 2004. Streisand's last recording, 2003's "The Movie Album," which she also co-produced, was a "concept album," not an all-hits selection. This year's experiment comes on the 25th anniversary of 12-million-copies strong "Guilty," which she recorded with Barry Gibb in 1980. In the Philippines, at the time, every aspiring female singer in the Philippines was crooning "I am a woman in love…" the local favorite from said album.

Strange duet

"Guilty Pleasures" isn't the kind of album to listen to while cleaning your room or cooking lunch, although it would do for driving down the highway from Antipolo to Pililia. You have to sit down and pay attention. The songs have to grow on you, if only because with the opening cut "Come Tomorrow," you start wondering if Streisand didn't make a mistake by again working with Gibb. The next cut, "Stranger in a Strange Land" is not much better. The duet with Gibb sounds strange.

But the third selection, "Hideaway," is significant. The refrain is catchy, and Streisand claims the song completely with the power, the phrasing, the fluidity, the emotional eloquence of her voice. It helps that the beat is bossa nova and that the arrangement is made deeper with rich strings.

This is followed by "It's Up To You"—something that sounds like honky-tonk country. But then, who knows what appeals to people nowadays? "Night of My Life" is forgettable.

"Above the Law" succeeds with the refrain's counterpart lines of Streisand and Gibbs. The upbeat "All the Children" and the recycled version of "(Our Love) Don't Throw it All Away," are easy to like and dance to. New songs to add to Barbra favorites are "Without Your Love," "Golden Dawn," and "Letting Go." This last one reminds you of Stephen Sondheim ("Send in the Clowns"), without the irony and poetry.

Because she is the Number One all-time best-selling female music artist—with 60-plus albums—Streisand does not depend on what is readily popular. She supports gay and lesbian issues, women's reproductive rights, other similar causes. As with her politics, so with her music: Streisand is not your off-the-rack recording artist.

Simon's surprise

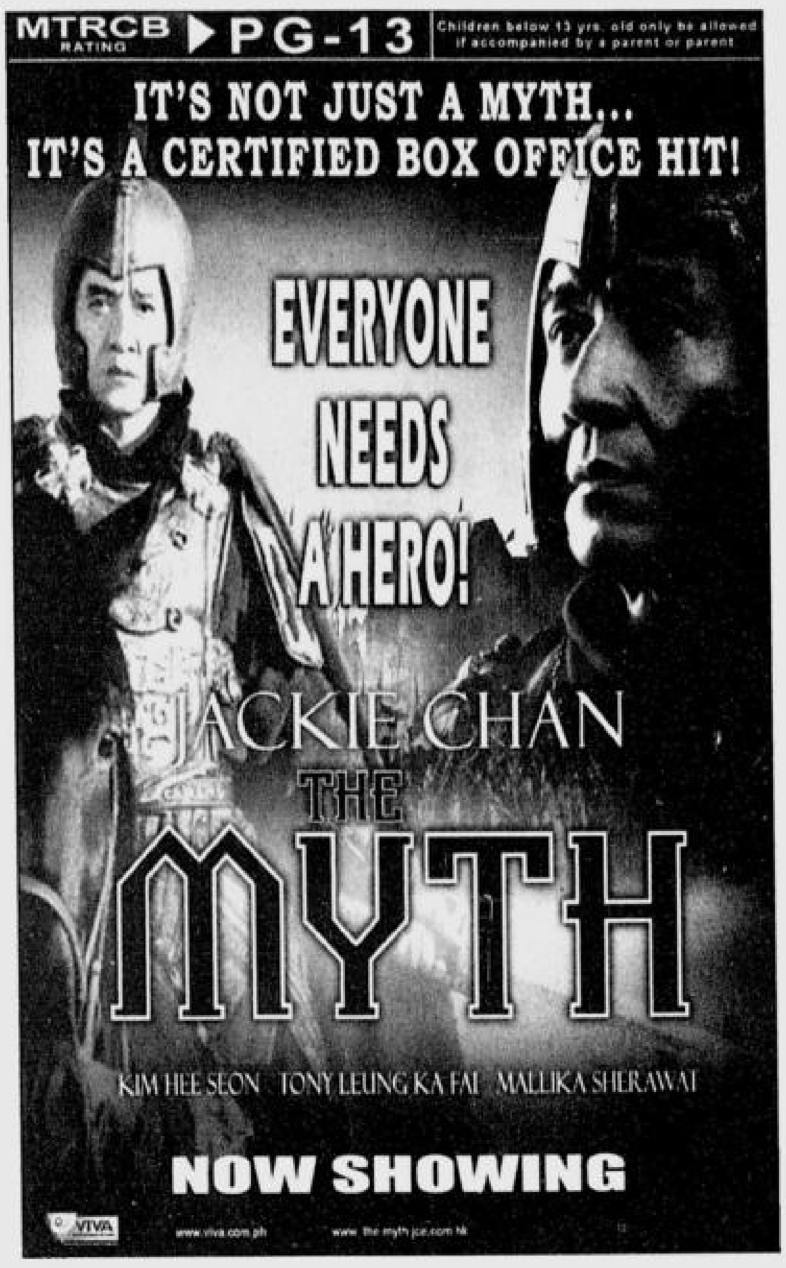
The aim to please could be boring and unexciting if all one had to do was string old favorites together. But singer-songwriter Carly Simon sheds her folk-rock image once again and surprises us with Moonlight Serenade. It is, in fact, her fourth such album in a genre that she seems to have started more than 25 years ago with the album, "Torch." Her interpretation in that album of "Body and Soul" is still the most memorable I have ever heard. (I still listen to it on cassette tape, since I got it long before the CD was even imagined.)

Today, many rockers—including KD Lang, Rod Stewart and Sting—are turning to "standards" to expand their audiences or to prop up sagging careers.

What makes Simon's project a gem is the delightful combination of her deep and raw voice with cool and smooth arrangements of producer Richard Perry. Her sax-like alto vocals would fill up any room, calling the attention of both young and senior audiences alike. My favorite cuts are her contemporary chic versions of Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade," Eddie DeLange's "Moonglow," Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's "All the Things You Are," and the best track, Cole Porter's elegant "In the Still of the Night."

If one is looking for a gift for romantics of any age, this would be a hands-down winner. How can one not fall for Victor Young's "My Foolish Heart," Lorenz Hart's "Where or When," Guy Wood's "My One and Only Love"? Or the Harry Warren-Al Dubin hit "I Only Have Eyes For You," popularized in the '60s by The Lettermen, and the song people usually associate with Cris Montez, "The More I See You"? Sammy Cohen's "Let it Snow" is even thrown in to make sure that you get the Christmas spirit.

(The author is the founder of the Women's Media Circle.)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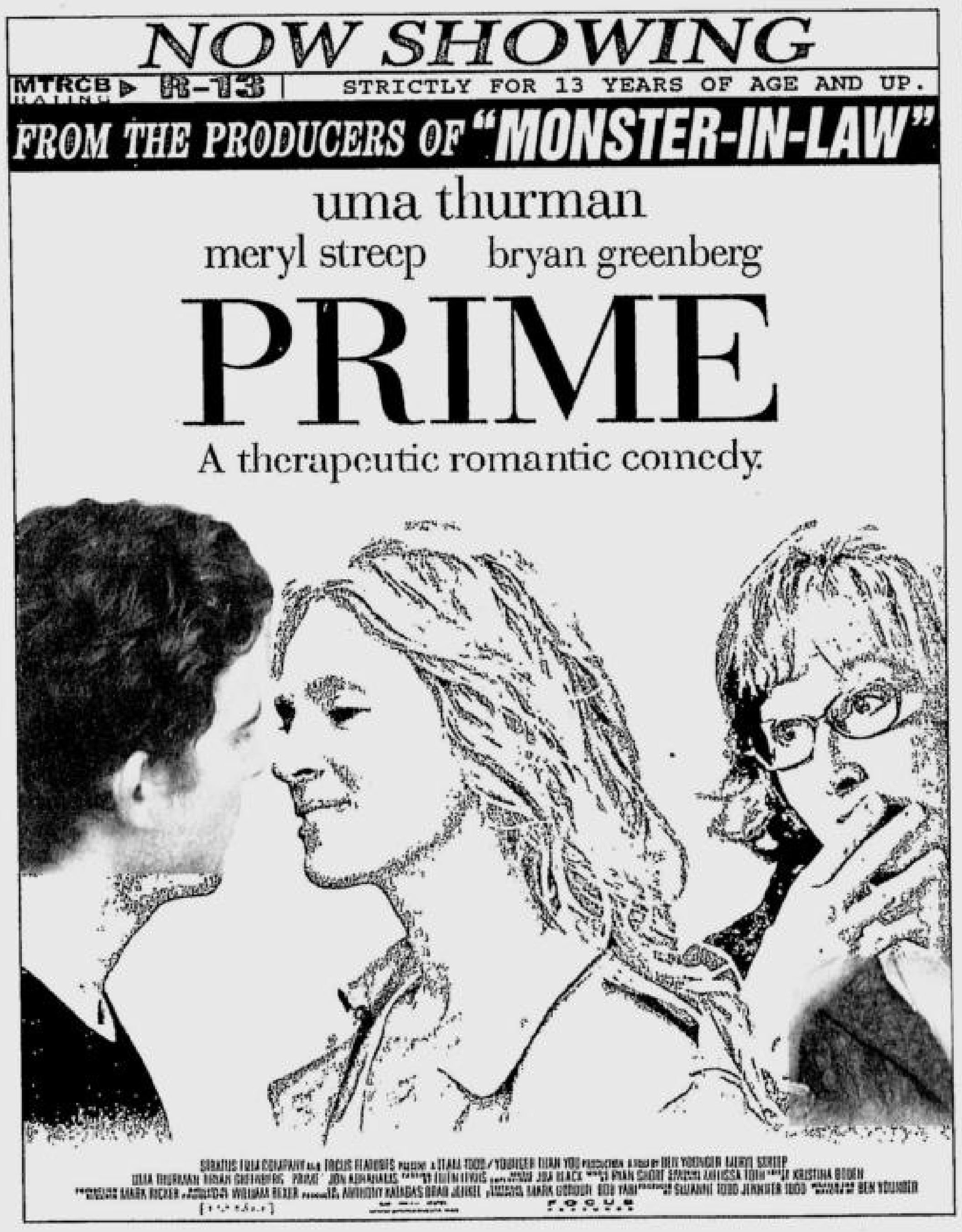
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Asian film scene scales the 'heights' of irony

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOW'S THIS for irony? The Asian film scene is generally languisihing, but **Jackie Chan** says that Asia will soon become the world's biggest movie market.

If he's right and some other international movie people echo his sentiments, this means that Asians will be viewing primarily imported film fare, mostly features coming from the Unites States.

The height of irony, indeed!

The region's "mental colonization" is complete: Asians have been "taught" to prefer foreign products over local ones, so they patronize imported movies over their own film industries' output, and Asian film people are hurting.

Adding insult to injury, many Asian viewers don't even care that their own countries' movies are being "killed" by the imports they love so much.

They argue: We want value for money, and American movies are bigger and better than local productions, so you can't blame us for preferring them.

Even if you inform them that many Asian film people and their families are having a tough time, it means next to nothing to them.

You argue: If Asian movies continue to suffer from lack of patronage, we won't have enough movies that reflect and dramatize the Asian experience, our thoughts, feelings and needs!

But some Asians can't relate to that argument, because they don't watch movies to confront their reality, but to run away from it by losing themselves in movie blockbusters' heady world of adventure and fantasy!

Since it's big imported movies that provide these thrills, they're the films that escapist and colonial-minded Asian viewers patronize. The "value for money" argument rides again!

So, is Asia fated to end up merely as imported films' biggest market, to the detriment of its own movies?

We hope that there are enough Asians out there who will realize the tragic irony of this future-imperfect scenario, and finally act to serve their own countries' movie industries, by patronizing their homegrown film products over the "invasion" of imports.

What about Filipino viewers? The industry's annual output has shrunk from 180 to 40 mainstream movies, and perhaps another 40 digital features this year. Digital film production has surged precisely to address the problem of mainstream producers' drastically reduced output.

Do we simply observe this "rescue effort" from the sidelines and watch our movie industry in its death throes, or will we finally realize that *we* have to save the industry, by patronizing both its mainstream *and* digital productions. Yes, many of them aren't as polished as the imports, but they're *ours*.

'Just Like Heaven'

In her latest starrer, "Just Like Heaven," **Reese Witherspoon** plays a lovable spirit who goes in search of her real identity—and finds true romance instead!

The film also stars **Mark Ruffalo** as the new resident of the apartment that **Reese's** ghostly character is haunting.

Against all odds, their relationship deepens into love—but they have very little time before their prospects for a future together permanently fade away!

Music Summit for HIV/AIDS

MTV Philippines is staging the third Staying Alive Music Summit for HIV/AIDS on Dec. 1 at The Fort's open Field, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. The Summit aims to send out key messages and create greater awareness about HIV/AIDS through music.

'Whispering Hope'

Young soprano **Alexis Edralin**, 1999 NAMCYA voice champion, performs at a fundraising concert for people who have lost their voices due to throat (laryngeal) cancer.

Also singing in the "Whispering Hope" concert on Dec. 11 at Philamlife Auditorium is versatile young tenor **Rogelio "Jun" Peñaverde Jr.**, with **Julie Mendoza** at the piano.

Call the Philippine Laryngectomee Clun Inc. at 534-8582 or email picinc"picinc.org.

ROUNDUP

End for 'Alias'

LOS ANGELES— "Alias" is going undercover for good.

The spy drama starring Jennifer Garner will end its five-season run in May, ABC announced Wednesday, promising a big finish.

"'Alias' is not going to wind down as it comes to an end, it's going to rev up, and we're going to make it the event it deserves to be," ABC Entertainment President Stephen McPherson said in a statement.

Garner and her husband, actor Ben Affleck, are expecting their first child around Christmas. Her pregnancy was written into "Alias" for her character, a globe-trotting spy. *AP*

Mel gives on

MEXICO CITY—Hollywood director Mel Gibson will donate sets from his new film "Apocalypto"—including six replicas of Mayan pyramids—to the Mexican state of Veracruz when work on the movie is finished, officials said Thursday.

Donated items also are to include several movie-set villages, local authorities said.

"He is doing some construction work, building in particular some pyramids and indigenous villages," said director of cinematography for Veracruz state Prospero Rebolledo. "He has donated to us these pyramids." Gibson's "Apocalypto," is an action adventure movie set in an ancient civilization around 3,000 years ago.

The shooting began on Nov. 14 and will be completed in late March or early April. *AFP*

Miss Press Club

NOMINATION forms for the first Miss National Press Club tilt are now available at the NPC Secretariat.

This was announced by club president Antonio A. Antonio, who also said Miss NPC '06 will be proclaimed on April 27 next year at the Manila Hotel.

Contestants should be students or graduates of Journalism or Mass Communications, or media practitioners who are Filipino citizens and single, from 18 to 25 years old, at least 5'4" tall, and of good moral character.

The winner will receive P200,000 in cash; runner-up, P100,000; second runner-up, P50,000.

Call 521-9300 for details.

For clean energy

ACTRESS Rica Peralejo has pledged full support to the Greenpeace campaign against global warming, and also enlisted the help of fellow celebrities Aga Muhlach, Edu Manzano and Bayani Agbayani.

Taking a break from her taping of the comedy show "Okay, Fine, Whatever," Rica persuaded her co-stars to speak on camera against climate change and for clean energy solutions. The footage will be used for 15-second TV spots to promote the Greenpeace drive.

A Jolie visit

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—Actress Angelina Jolie has visited earthquake-ravaged northern Pakistan, the UN refugee agency official said.

Jolie, a goodwill ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, went to a village in a remote valley, flying aboard a helicopter that brought food, blankets and plastic sheets to improve shelters, UNHCR spokeswoman Vivian Tan said.

She said she did not know whether actor Brad Pitt, who has been sporadically spotted and photographed with Jolie for months, was with her. *AP*

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1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 LEGEND OF ZORRO
3 RESERVED
4 MY LITTLE BRIDE
5 PRIME
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 PAPARAZZI
8 FLIGHTPLAN
9 APRIL SNOW
10 TRUMPETS: LITTLE MERMAID
11 THE MYTH
12 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
SM CITY STA. MESA
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 PRIME
5 THE MYTH
6 MY LITTLE BRIDE
7 FLIGHTPLAN
8 PAPARAZZI
9 APRIL SNOW
10 LEGEND OF ZORR
SM CITY BICUTAN
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 THE MYTH
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
3 THE MYTH
4 MY LITTLE BRIDE
SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 PAPARAZZI
2 MY LITTLE BRIDE
3 APRIL SNOW
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 THE MYTH
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
8 CHICKEN LITTLE
9 PRIME
10 LEGEND OF ZORRO
11 ISPIRITISTA
12 FLIGHTPLAN
SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 THE MYTH
5 PRIME
6 FLIGHTPLAN
7 PAPARAZZI
8 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
9 LEGEND OF ZORRO
10 APRIL SNOW
SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 THE MYTH
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 THE MYTH
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 PRIME
4 APRIL SNOW
5 PAPARAZZI
6 FLIGHTPLAN
7 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
8 CHICKEN LITTLE
SM CITY MANILA
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 APRIL SNOW
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
5 LEGEND OF ZORRO
6 PAPARAZZI
7 FLIGHTPLAN
8 PRIME
9 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
10 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
11 ISPIRITISTA
12 THE MYTH
SM CINEMA CAINTA
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
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6 THE MYTH
SM CITY BAGUIO
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 THE MYTH
3 FOUR BROTHERS
4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
3 CHICKEN LITTLE
4 THE MYTH
SM CITY BACOOR
1 MY LITTLE BRIDE
2 ISPIRITISTA
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 THE MYTH
6 CHICKEN LITTLE
7 FLIGHTPLAN
8 PAPARAZZI
SM CITY MARILAO
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 ADVENTURE OF SHARKBOY & LAVA GIRL
3 HISTORY OF VIOLENCE
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 CRY WOLF
3 THE MYTH
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
SM CITY LUCENA
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
3 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN
4 ADVENTURE OF SHARKBOY & LAVA GIRL
SM CITY BATANGAS
1 CHICKEN LITTLE
2 MY SASSY GIRL
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
SM CITY CEBU
1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 THE MYTH
3 FOUR BROTHERS
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
6 FLIGHTPLAN
7 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
8 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
SM CITY ILOILO
1 UNDISCOVERED
2 RESERVED
3 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
4 CHICKEN LITTLE
5 AB-NORMAL BEAUTY
6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
7 RESERVED
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1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
2 CHICKEN LITTLE
3 FOUR BROTHERS
4 WAITING
5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
6 THE MYTH
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HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE GP 2:40,5:50,9:00
EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15
THE MYTH PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15
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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 FLIGHTPLAN	2 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE	3 THX HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE 2:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE MYTH	5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	6 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	7 PRIME
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE MYTH 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45	2 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE 11:20, 2:30, 5:40, 8:50		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE 1:20, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE 2:40 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 PRIME 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HARRY POTTER 4 1:30, 6:40, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE		
	3 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE	4 PRIME	5 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE	2 THE MYTH	3 FOUR BROTHERS	4 HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

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Alabang Town Center -	842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
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② THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
③ PRIME
④ HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE
⑤ THE MYTH

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1 HARRY POTTER 4• THX
12.00 3:10 6:20 9:30

2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

3 PRIME
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
11:30 2:40 6:50 9:00

5 THE MYTH
12.00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12.20 2.45 5:10 7:35 10.00

7 MY LITTLE BRIDE
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

8 APRIL SNOW
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

9 FLIGHTPLAN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 THE LEGEND OF ZORRO 2
1:25 4:10 6:55 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 HARRY POTTER and the GOBLET of FIRE 10:20 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

2 MY LITTLE BRIDE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

3 APRIL SNOW
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50

4 FLIGHTPLAN
10.30 12:15 2:00 4:00 8:00 9:50

5 THE MYTH
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
12:30 2 50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 PRIME
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE LEGEND OF ZORRO 2
1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
12:10 3:20 6:30 9:40

3 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

4 FLIGHTPLAN
12:40 2:45 4 50 6:55 9:00

5 THE MYTH
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

6 PRIME
1:20 3.55 6:30 9:05

7 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
12:45 3:55 7:05

8 MY LITTLE BRIDE
1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 THE MYTH
4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 THE LEGEND OF ZORRO 2
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-6378

1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE MYTH
3 PRIME
4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

CHECK THIS OUT ▸▸

ROBINSONS CINEMAS Novaliches

NOw oPen!

Cinema 1 HARRY POTTER 4
Cinema 2 HARRY POTTER 4
Cinema 3 THE MYTH
Cinema 4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

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1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE ADV. of SHARKBOY & LAVAGIRL
3 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 2
4 FOUR BROTHERS
5 THE MYTH

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1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 THE ADV. of SHARKBOY & LAVAGIRL
3 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 2
4 THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN

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1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 WAITING
3 DOMINO
4 THE MYTH

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2 THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN
3 ILUSYON
4 THE ADV. OF SHARKBOY & LAVAGIRL

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1 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 DOMINO
4 THE MYTH
5 MY LITTLE BRIDE

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1 AB-NORMAL; BEAUTY
2 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
3 ILUSYON
4 A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE
5 DOMINO
6 THE MYTH

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1 HARRY POTTER & the GOBLET of FIRE
2 WAITING
3 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 2
4 THE CORPSE BRIDE
5 MY SASSY GIRL
6 ILUSYON

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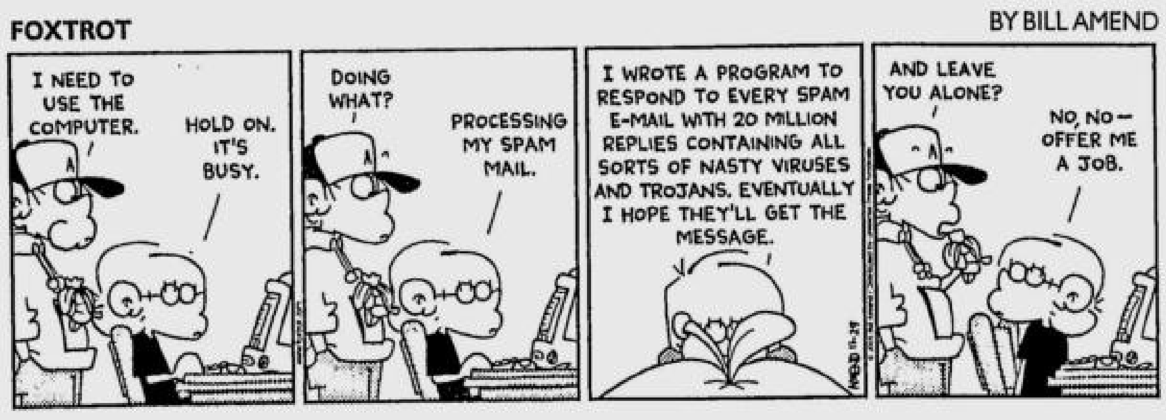
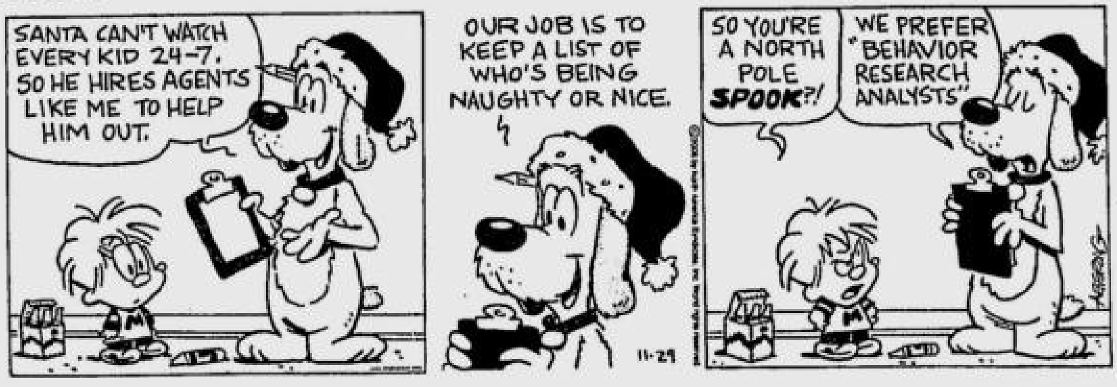
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I NEED TO USE THE COMPUTER.
HOLD ON. IT'S BUSY.
DOING WHAT?
PROCESSING MY SPAM MAIL.
I WROTE A PROGRAM TO RESPOND TO EVERY SPAM E-MAIL WITH 20 MILLION REPLIES CONTAINING ALL SORTS OF NASTY VIRUSES AND TROJANS. EVENTUALLY I HOPE THEY'LL GET THE MESSAGE.
AND LEAVE YOU ALONE?
NO, NO — OFFER ME A JOB.

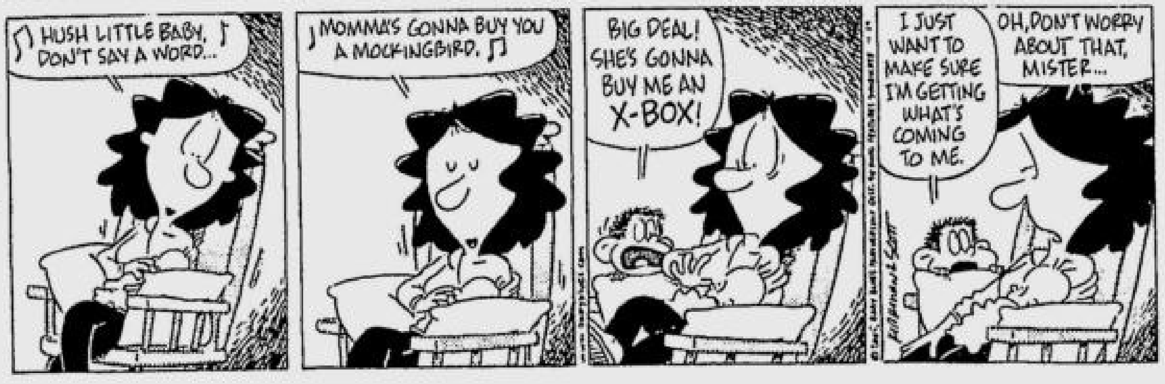
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SANTA CAN'T WATCH EVERY KID 24-7. SO HE HIRES AGENTS LIKE ME TO HELP HIM OUT.
OUR JOB IS TO KEEP A LIST OF WHO'S BEING NAUGHTY OR NICE.
SO YOU'RE A NORTH POLE SPOOK?!
WE PREFER "BEHAVIOR RESEARCH ANALYSTS"
11-29

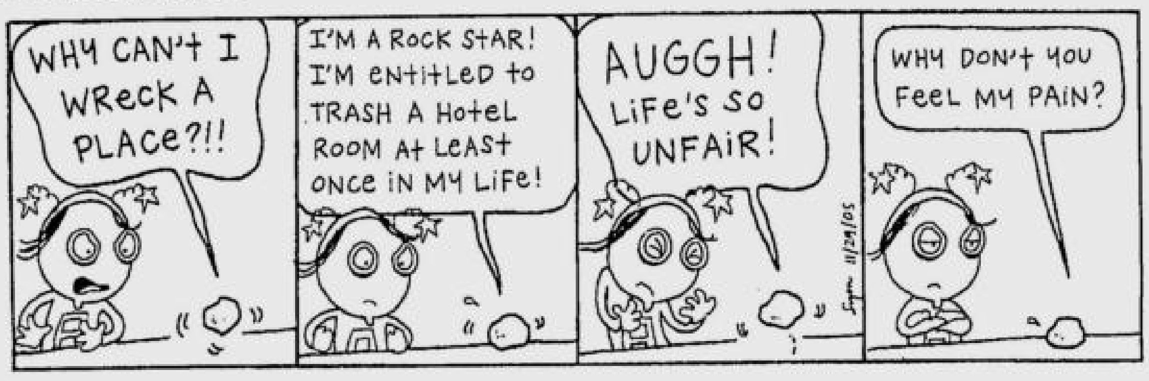
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HUSH LITTLE BABY, DON'T SAY A WORD...
MOMMA'S GONNA BUY YOU A MOCKINGBIRD.
BIG DEAL! SHE'S GONNA BUY ME AN X-BOX!
I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE I'M GETTING WHAT'S COMING TO ME.
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, MISTER...

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHY CAN'T I WRECK A PLACE?!!
I'M A ROCK STAR! I'M ENTITLED TO TRASH A HOTEL ROOM AT LEAST ONCE IN MY LIFE!
AUGGH! LIFE'S SO UNFAIR!
WHY DON'T YOU FEEL MY PAIN?
11/29/05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are both idealistic and practical. Because honesty means a lot to you, it's important that you know where you stand with others. You are loyal and honorable, but it's always unspoken. You're spontaneous, yet you like order and structure in your life. Important choices await you in the next year. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Louisa May Alcott, writer; Chuck Mangione, trumpeter; Jeff Fahey, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be gentle with yourself today. And be gentle with others. It's easy to feel critical of everything around you because you're disappointed in something. (This passes quickly.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might feel disillusioned with others today—especially partners or close friends. But you have to ask yourself: Are your expectations realistic? Maybe not.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's a bit challenging at work today. Nothing is where it's supposed to be. People let you down. You might get discouraged. Be aware that everybody feels this way today; you're not alone.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): There isn't a parent in the world who doesn't feel guilty at times. Raising children is an enormous responsibility. Don't be down on yourself today regarding children and creative projects.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might feel sorry for a family member today, or you might feel sorry for yourself. These feelings won't help anyone. What disappoints you today is an illusion! Don't worry about it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might hear something today or see something that somehow confirms your worst fears about yourself. Actually, this is really your imagination. Lighten up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's surprising how our sense of wealth has little to do with what we own or how much money we have. It's an attitude. Today you doubt your sense of good fortune. (Let this go.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The Moon in your sign makes you more emotional. You're sensitive to failures and feelings of inadequacy. Hey—who's perfect? No one. Relax.

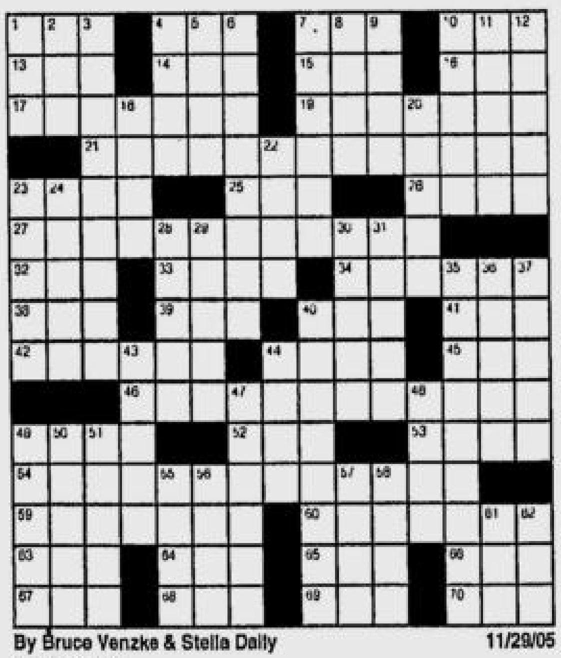
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Optimism and physical activity are survival issues for you. You have to believe in yourself, and you have to believe in a better tomorrow. Therefore, dispel those negative vibes!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A friend might disappoint you. Or vice versa. Keep in mind that only those you really care about can get a reaction from you. Don't take this seriously.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might feel like a boss or a parent is upset with you today. Or you might feel let down. There's a lot of confusing negative vibes out there today. Shake them off!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Unexpressed expectations lead to disappointment. Unrealistic expectations do the same thing. Ironically, when you're disillusioned, it means the illusion is now removed! (Go figure.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Bruce Venzke & Stella Daily
Madison, WI
11/29/05

ACROSS
1 Seek charity
4 Dispenser candy
7 Like Carroll's Hatter
10 CIA, once
13 Actress Lupino
14 Felling tool
15 Buckeyes' sch.
16 Dundee denial
17 Having more ringlets
19 Stationary sculpture
21 Monopoly concern
23 Bluish green
25 Osaka okay
26 __ 500
27 Luther Vandross show, e.g.
32 Shaping tool
33 Barak of Israel
34 Takes an easy stroll
38 Altar promise
39 K. Capek play
40 Some MDs
41 Track circuit
42 Struggling breather
44 Comida cheers
45 P. Hearst's kidnappers
46 Root beer chain
49 Make unclear
52 Std.
53 Lambs' moms
54 Leave for a G.I.
59 Like some boat motors
60 Do better door-to-door
63 In the past
64 __ me with a spoon!
65 66, e.g.
66 Comic Romano
67 Oedipus' title
68 Shoshone
69 Shut yer __!
70 CBS logo

DOWN
1 Pen name?
2 Part of some URLs
3 Chickpeas
4 Tylenol's target
5 Marked a questionnaire
6 Critical time
7 Composite picture
8 __ Spumante
9 Binary
10 Vegetable for stews
11 Leafy course
12 Run-down
18 Find a perch
20 Limeys
22 South African bread?
23 Golfer Stadler
24 Thrice repeated Seinfeld catchphrase
28 Cleveland suburb
29 Butter maker
30 Glowing coal
31 Architect Aldo
35 Not here
36 New Haven student
37 Crosses
40 U.S. flag
43 Don of "SNL"
44 Debtor
47 Menial worker
48 Carrots and peas, for short
49 Pipe material
50 "Tootsie" star Jessica
51 Remove from packaging
55 Prego rival
56 Campus house
57 I'm __ here!
58 Miners of the WAC
61 Set down
62 Caustic stuff

Monday's Puzzle Solved

A	N	G	O	R	A		G	A	D		M	A	S	T
D	E	A	D	E	N		O	X	Y		A	B	L	Y
D	E	L	E	C	T	A	B	L	E		S	H	I	P
			S	O	L	D	I	E	R	S	H	O	M	E
U	P	S		L	E	I				A	I	R	E	D
S	U	P	P	O	R	T	P	I	E	C	E			
A	M	O	U	R			R	A	N	K		W	A	L
G	A	R	B		B	L	O	N	D		M	A	L	I
E	S	T		R	O	A	D			C	O	L	O	N
			M	E	A	N	S	P	I	R	I	T	E	D
I	M	B	E	D				R	S	A		Z	S	A
D	I	A	M	O	N	D	P	O	I	N	T			
A	L	S	O		I	R	R	A	T	I	O	N	A	L
H	A	I	R		P	I	A		M	U	T	A	T	E
O	N	L	Y		S	P	Y		E	M	O	T	E	D

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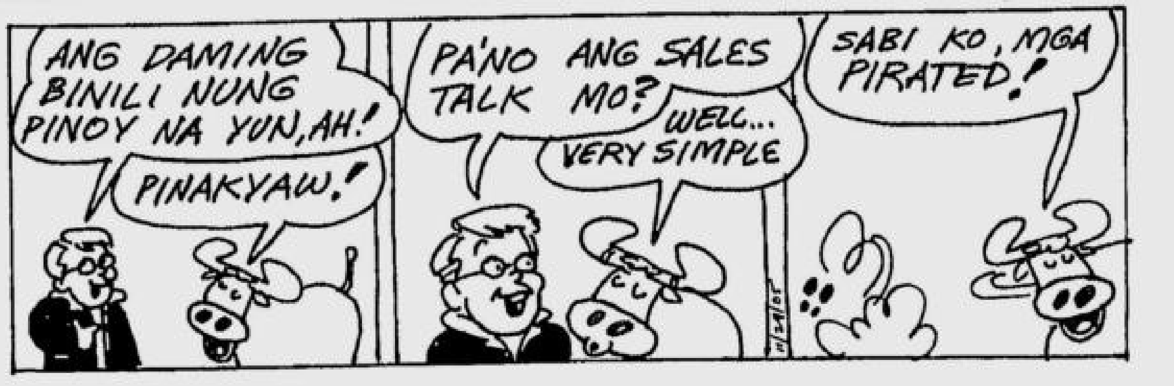
11/28/05

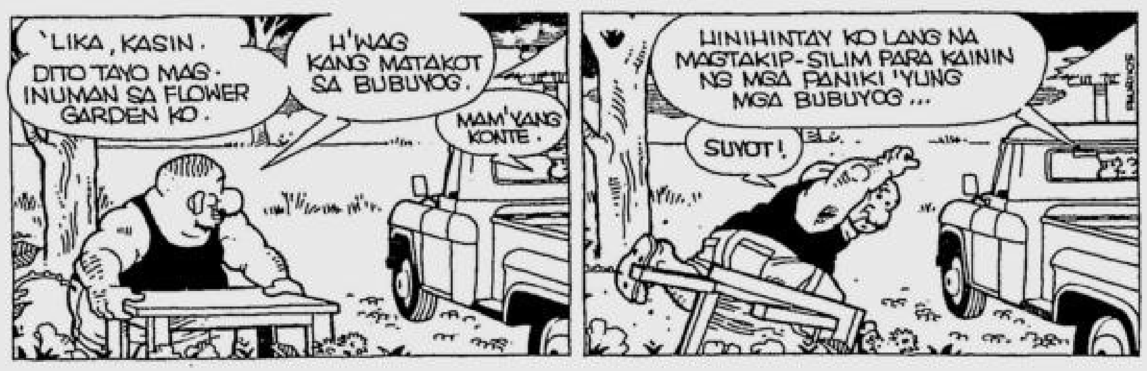
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG DAMING BINILI NUNG PINOY NA YUN, AH!
PINAKYAW!
PA'NO ANG SALES TALK MO?
WELL... VERY SIMPLE
SABI KO, MGA PIRATED!

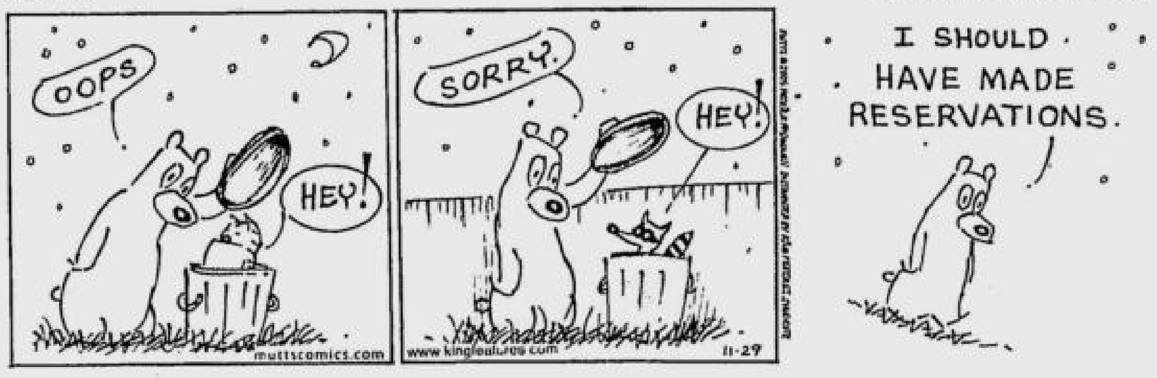
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'LIKA, KASIN. DITO TAYO MAG-INUMAN SA FLOWER GARDEN KO.
H'WAG KANG MATAKOT SA BUBUYOG.
MAM'YANG KONTE.
HINIHINTAY KO LANG NA MAGTAKIP-SILIM PARA KAININ NG MGA PANIKI 'YUNG MGA BUBUYOG...
SUYOT!

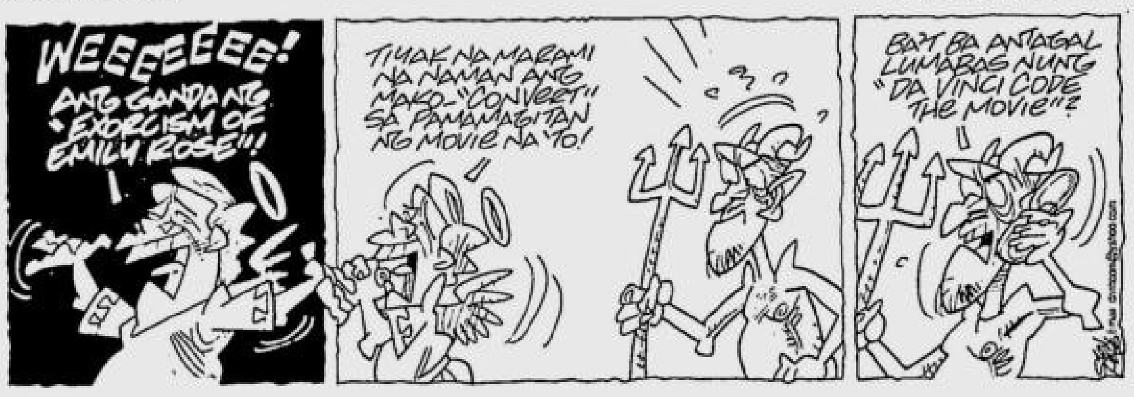
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OOPS
HEY!
SORRY.
HEY!
I SHOULD HAVE MADE RESERVATIONS.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
11-29

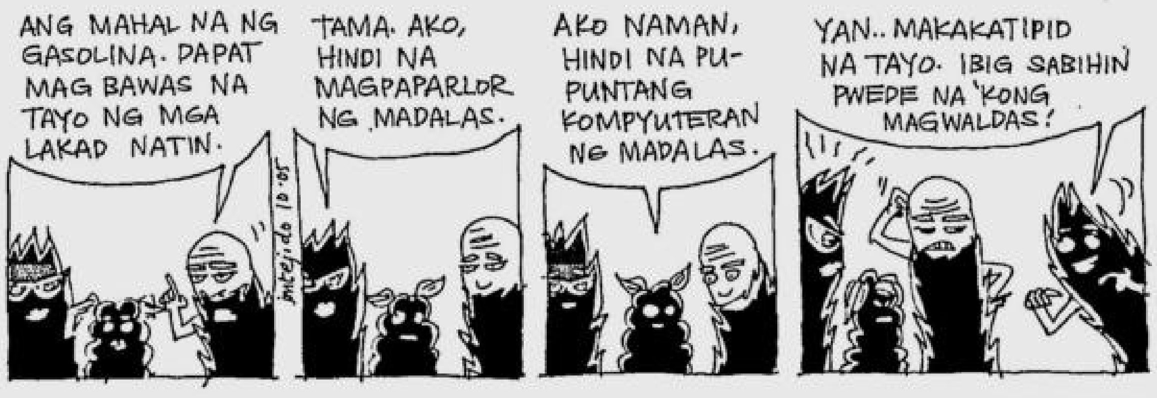
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WEEEEEEE! ANG GANDA NG "EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE"!!
TIYAK NA MARAMI NA NAMAN ANG MAKO-"CONVERT" SA PAMAMAGITAN NG MOVIE NA 'TO!
BA'T BA ANTAGAL LUMABAS NUNG "DA VINCI CODE THE MOVIE"?!

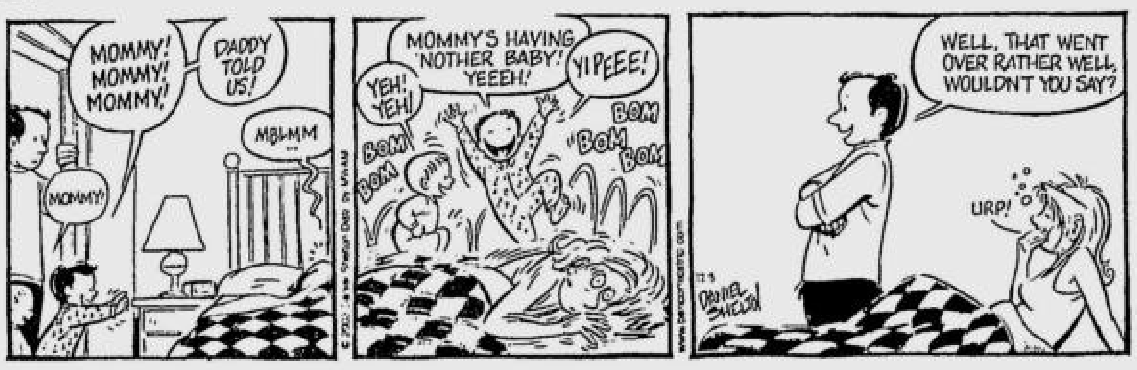
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG MAHAL NA NG GASOLINA. DAPAT MAG BAWAS NA TAYO NG MGA LAKAD NATIN.
TAMA. AKO, HINDI NA MAGPAPARLOR NG MADALAS.
AKO NAMAN, HINDI NA PUPUNTANG KOMPYUTERAN NG MADALAS.
YAN.. MAKAKATIPID NA TAYO. IBIG SABIHIN PWEDE NA 'KONG MAGWALDAS!

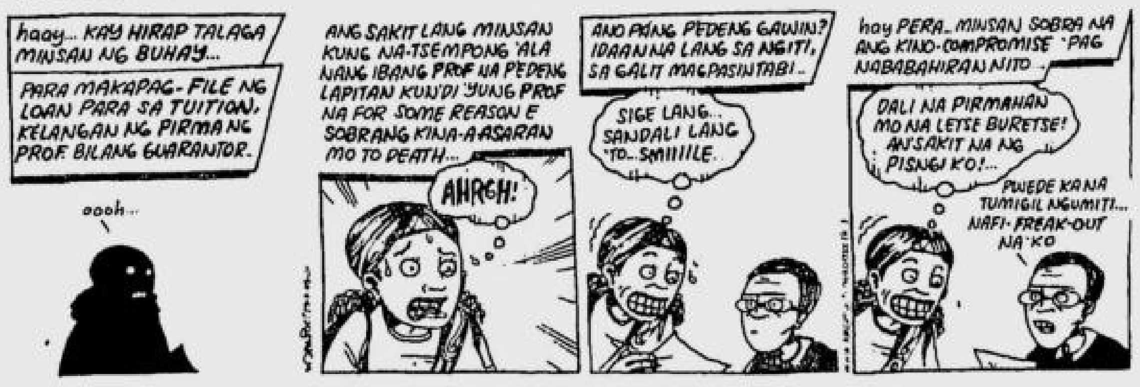
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOMMY! MOMMY! MOMMY!
DADDY TOLD US!
MOMMY!
MBLMM
MOMMY'S HAVING 'NOTHER BABY! YEEEH!
YEH! YEH!
YIPEEE!
BOM BOM
BOM BOM BOM
WELL, THAT WENT OVER RATHER WELL, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
URP!

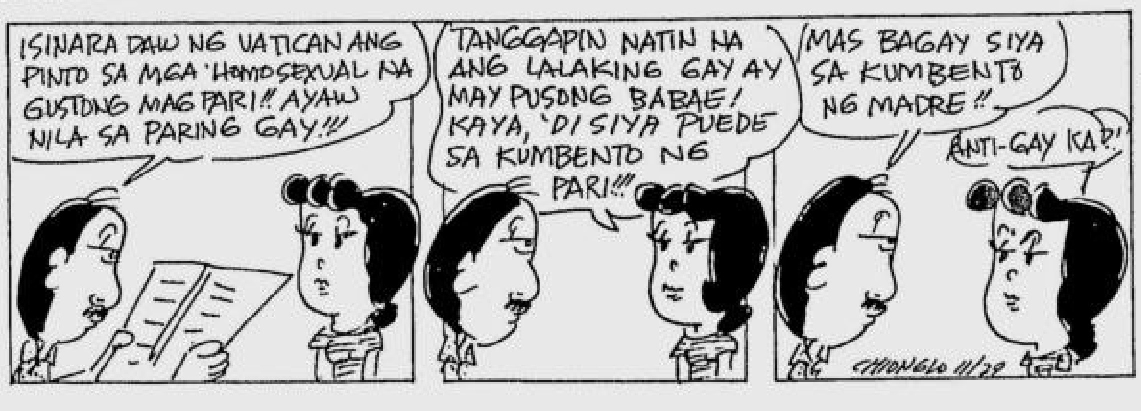
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


haay... KAY HIRAP TALAGA MINSAN NG BUHAY...
PARA MAKAPAG-FILE NG LOAN PARA SA TUITION, KELANGAN NG PIRMA NG PROF BILANG GUARANTOR.
oooh...
ANG SAKIT LANG MINSAN KUNG NA-TSEMPONG 'ALA NANG IBANG PROF NA PEDENG LAPITAN KUN'DI 'YUNG PROF NA FOR SOME REASON E SOBRANG KINA-AASARAN MO TO DEATH...
AHRGH!
ANO PANG PEDENG GAWIN? IDAAN NA LANG SA NGITI, SA GALIT MAGPASINTABI...
SIGE LANG... SANDALI LANG 'TO... SMIIIILE.
hoy PERA... MINSAN SOBRA NA ANG KINO-COMPROMISE 'PAG NABABAHIRAN NITO...
DALI NA PIRMAHAN MO NA LETSE BURETSE! ANSAKIT NA NG PISNGI KO!...
PUEDE KA NA TUMIGIL NGUMITI... NAFI-FREAK-OUT NA'KO

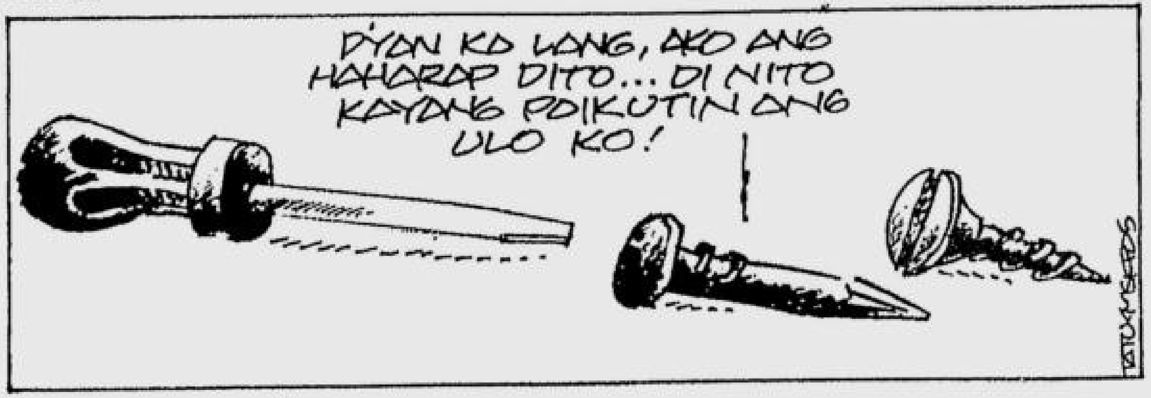
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ISINARA DAW NG VATICAN ANG PINTO SA MGA 'HOMOSEXUAL NA GUSTONG MAG PARI!! AYAW NILA SA PARING GAY!!!
TANGGAPIN NATIN NA ANG LALAKING GAY AY MAY PUSONG BABAE! KAYA, 'DI SIYA PUEDE SA KUMBENTO NG PARI!!!
MAS BAGAY SIYA SA KUMBENTO NG MADRE!!
ANTI-GAY KA?!
CHIONGLO 11/29

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


D'YAN KA LANG, AKO ANG HAHARAP DITO... DI NITO KAYANG PAIKUTIN ANG ULO KO!

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NOVEMBER 29, 2005
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Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma
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XTRA
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PETRON

Consumers gain slight confidence

Adviser sought in sale of state-run IBC, RPN

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT is searching for a financial adviser that will facilitate the sale of state-owned television stations IBC Channel 13 and RPN Channel 9.

The government has included the television stations, which have not been earning profits, in the list of state assets to be privatized next year.

The government said part of the proceeds from the privatization would be used to fund infrastructure projects.

Officials from the Department of Finance had said that the government no longer found it viable to run the television stations. They said the government could still fulfill the task of public communication even without the broadcast stations.

Jose A.R. Bengzon III, head of the Privatization Management Office (PMO), said whoever the government would choose as financial adviser would be tasked with preparing a valuation report on the two government properties.

The PMO also said that the financial adviser would decide on whether it would be best for the government to sell the two television stations individually or jointly.

The PMO said in a statement that it had allotted P6 million to pay for the services of the would-be financial adviser.

The government office said interested bidders should submit their letters of intent on or before Nov. 30.

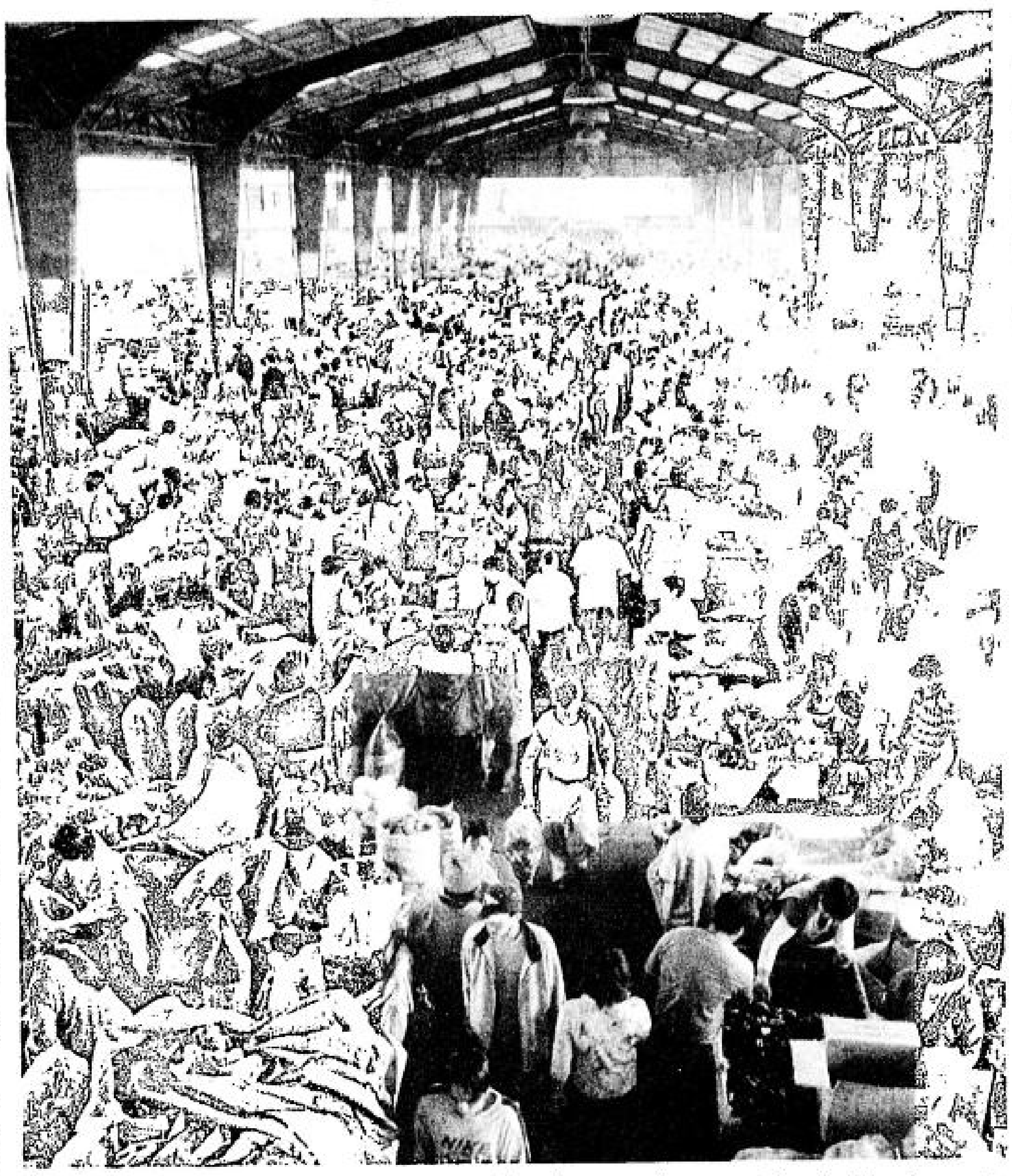
"The criteria for shortlisting include general experience of the firm, privatization experience, qualifications and current work load of personnel assigned to the project, and the firm's dealings with the government," the PMO said.

The government is hoping to generate at least P1 billion next year from the sale of state assets.

Aside from the television stations, the government is looking at selling other assets like the Al-Amanah Bank, the Philippine Postal Corp., equity shares in San Miguel Corp., and real properties of the PNOC-EDC.

This year, the government expects to generate P1 billion from privatization.

It has already exceeded the amount after it sold the bulk of its shares in Philippine National Bank to the Lucio Tan group.



PEOPLE in Northern Luzon buy their vegetables whenever they can at the giant trading post in La Trinidad, Benguet. Based on previous surveys, consumer pessimism had hit rock bottom. But that outlook, according to the central bank, is now improving. AFP

But prospects remain bleak, says BSP poll

By Doris C. Dumlao

FILIPINO CONSUMERS THIS fourth quarter are slowly starting to regain their confidence in the economy on hopes of improved incomes, more job opportunities abroad, and sound government policies, according to a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas survey.

Still, there are more Filipinos who are pessimistic rather than optimistic—even with the holidays approaching.

Based on the quarterly diffusion index (DI) of the BSP, the percentage share of respondents that answered in the affirmative are considerably less than those that answered in the negative.

Although the BSP's fourth quarter consumer expectations survey indicated that overall consumer outlook remained bleak—the current DI was pegged at -52.7 percent—it still marked an improvement of 1.4 index points from the previous quarter's 54.1 percent.

In the second quarter, the DI stood at -49.9 percent.

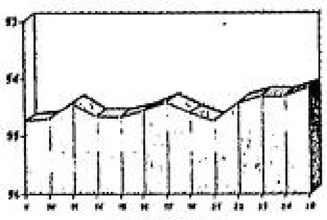
This means that consumer pessimism has bottomed out, and overall confidence is starting to trickle back.

All three component indices in the current survey also showed slight improvements from

CONSUMERS/ B9

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 54.15 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 25, 2005

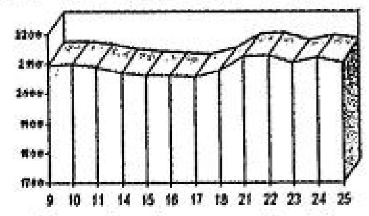
¥ 119.27 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 25, 2005

GOLD: $495.10-495.60

per ounce Hong Kong, Nov. 25, 2005

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Trading resumes today

TRADING YESTERDAY WAS SUSPENDED after the government declared Nov. 28 a non-working holiday.

Last Friday, share prices closed 0.64 percent lower, with Philippine Long Distance Telephone leading the losers, dealers said.

That day, the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 13.55 points to 2,106.10, after trading between 2,098.38 and 2,121.98.

Turnover was 1.09 billion shares worth

TRADING/ B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

Gokongwei group to expand sugar facilities in Negros /B5

DBP to sell P13B worth of bad loans, idle assets via SPV /B9

PNCC seeks to hike expressway toll anew

By Clarissa S. Batino

SOUTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY motorists may be saddled with another burden this January.

Philippine National Construction Corp. has asked the Toll Regulatory Board for a 29-percent toll increase for the use of the 30-kilometer expressway that connects Metro Manila to provinces in South Luzon.

The state-owned PNCC said the adjustment was necessary for it to achieve a 12-percent return on rate base, as stated in its charter.

The toll board has yet to approve the increase and will meet next week to decide on the PNCC petition.

The PNCC said that, for Class 1 or light vehicles such as cars and jeeps, it would increase the toll by 21 centavos for every kilometer.

The toll for Class 2 vehicles or light trucks and buses will be raised by 42 centavos a kilometer. For Class 3 vehicles, the toll will be raised by 63 centavos a kilometer.

Luis Antonio of the PNCC said the new rates would be: for Class 1 vehicles, 93 centavos a kilometer, up from 72 centavos a kilometer; for Class 2 vehicles, P1.86 a kilometer from P1.44 a kilometer; and, for Class 3 vehicles, P2.79 a kilometer from P2.16 a kilometer.

PNCC hopes that the increase will take effect on Jan. 1, 2006.

For Class 1 vehicles, the increase will raise the rate for use of the total stretch to P27 from P21. For Class 2 vehicles, the rate will go up to P53 from P41. For Class 3, the rate will be P80 from P62.

"Every year, we adjust our rates as allowed by the law that created PNCC," Antonio said in

PNCC/ B4

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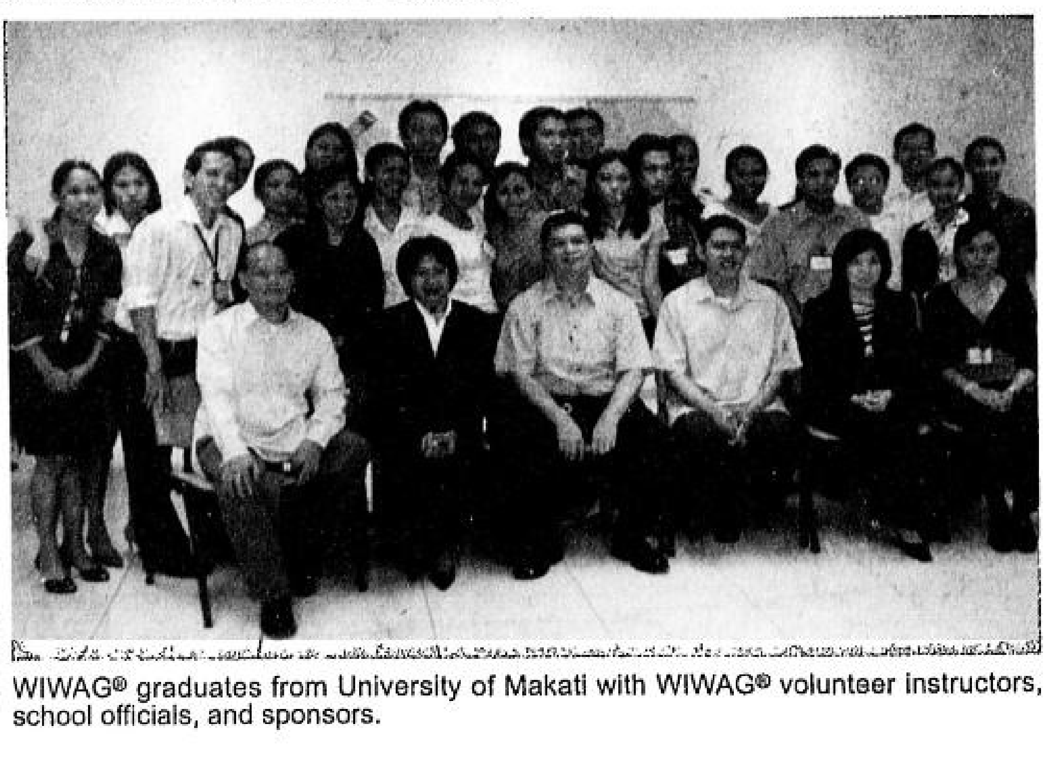
WIWAG® Business Weeks gains more partners as it sweeps across the country

WIWAG® graduates from Araullo University with WIWAG® volunteer instructors, school officials, and sponsors.

WIWAG® graduates from Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology with WIWAG® volunteer instructors.

WIWAG® graduates from Bulacan State University with WIWAG® volunteer instructors.

WIWAG® graduates from Polytechnic University of the Philiipines with WIWAG® volunteer instructors, school officials, sponsors, and Mr. Alex Vonow (seated middle), SVP-Manufacturing of Holcim Philippines.



WIWAG® graduates from University of Makati with WIWAG® volunteer instructors, school officials, and sponsors.

The Education for Youth Enterprise Foundation, Inc. (EYE Foundation) concluded its 2005 WIWAG® business-training program with five more classes for students of the University of Makati, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Araullo University, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, and the Bulacan State University.

The WIWAG® Business Weeks is a five-day training concept based on a computer-assisted business simulation game providing additional knowledge in economics and business management issues giving students an overall experience in business management. It interlinks basic knowledge of economics, production, marketing, and human resources.

The last round of the 2005 WIWAG® business-training program was sponsored by Holcim Philippines, Inc., Petron Foundation, PHINMA Foundation, and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation. The trained volunteer instructors included Jose Wilson, William Sumalinog, and Engracio Bustos, Jr. of Holcim Philippines; Susan Jo of Petron Corp.; Krisalyn Chambers of SPI Foundation; Celenita Francisco of Fortune Professional Management Services; Elrei Evangelista of UCPB-CIIF Finance and Development Corp.; Agnes Raña of SEDP; Ma. Pamela Castro of Pilipinas Shell Foundation; and Manuel Cordero, Jr.

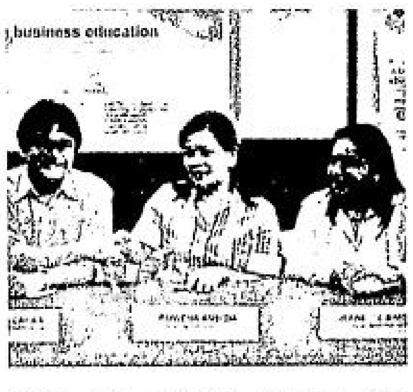
The Eye Foundation continues to welcome volunteer instructors and sponsors for the coming year. Please contact the **EYE Foundation, c/o Holcim Philippines, Inc., L3 PHINMA Plaza, Rockwell Center, Makati City; Tel. nos. 8700165 or 8700309; Fax no. 8700498.**

Ms. Elaine Mapa, Executive Director of the EYE Foundation and Ms. Ana Mendoza, Program Coordinator, will be happy to sit down and discuss the WIWAG® Business Weeks with all interested parties.

MoA signing between sponsors and schools

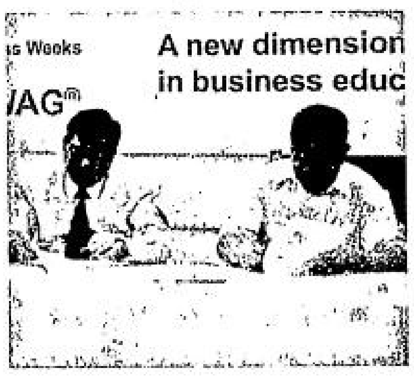
MSU-IIT, Iligan and Holcim Philippines; (seated from left) Dr. Miguel Martinez, Dean, College of Business Administration, and Mr. Bobby Sajonia, VP for Operations, Holcim Philippines; (standing from left) Dr. Rizalia Teves, Asst. Dean, and Mr. Julius Baliog, MSES & CSR Manager, Holcim Philippines.

Araullo University, Cabanatuan and PHINMA Foundation; (from left) Dr. Jose Paglinawan, Jr., Dean, College of Commerce and Accountancy; Ms. Jeanette Fabul, COO, Araullo University; and Mr. Chito Salazar Jr., Trustee, PHINMA Foundation.



PUP, Sta. Mesa, Manila and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.; (from left) Dr. Arturo Caras, Dean, College of Business; Ms. Rowena Ambide, Pandacan Field Sales Manager, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.; and Ms. Jeanette Barretto, Head-Social Performance, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.

Opening rites at the University of Makati (UMAK) with Ms. Marilou Erni, Executive Director of Petron Foundation (3rd from left) and Dr. Edita Chan, EVP of UMAK (5th from right), and the special participation of the Swiss Ambassador, Her Excellency Lise Favre (5th from left)



Bulacan State University (BSU), Malolos and Holcim Philippines; (from left) Mr. Julius Yballe, Holcim Bulacan Plant Manager, and Dr. Mariano De Jesus, EVP, BSU.

Everybody wins with WIWAG®

"Petron is all for fuelling HOPE – Helping the Filipino children and youth Overcome Poverty through Education. Supporting WIWAG® helps us achieve this goal through entrepreneurship education. Hopefully we are able to develop the next generation of business leaders and wealth creators." - **Marilou G. Erni**, Executive Director, Petron Foundation, Inc.

"Pilipinas Shell has always supported education. We always believe in what education and WIWAG® can do for the youth." - **Jeanette L. Barretto**, Head-Social Performace, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.

"WIWAG® has a proven track record in enhancing students' knowledge in organizing and managing businesses through the right mix of lecture and hands on training. The training process is done by volunteers who are themselves successful in their particular field of business and have gone through the WIWAG® Trainors Training program." - **Laurie Javier**, Executive Director, The PHINMA Foundation

"The University of Makati believes in learning by doing as exemplified by our Dualized Education System (DUES) program and WIWAG® is a perfect fit and partner in our DUES Strategy" - **Dr. Elyxzur Ramos**, Dean, College of Business Administration, University of Makati

"The WIWAG® Training certainly enhances business acumen of our students in the College of Commerce and Accountancy." - **Dr. Jose Paglinawan, Jr.**, Dean College of Commerce and Accountancy, Araullo University

"WIWAG® is a very nice and educational experience for our students. They can definitely use it in the future." - **Dr. Norma Morala**, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Bulacan State University

"WIWAG® Weeks, with business simulation games conducted by practitioners from the country's top corporations, enhance classroom learning. Students get a feel of being business executives for a week and emerge from the experience with a deeper appreciation of entrepreneurship." - **Dr. Alita Roxas**, MBM Coordinator, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology

"PUP always welcomes and deeply appreciates the well-rounded and fruitful internationally known WIWAG® Training given for our students' educational enhancement. Kudos also to Pilipinas Shell and EYE Foundation!" - **Dr. Arturo Caras**, Dean, College of Business, Polytechnic University of the Philippines

"I've learned my potentials in business, had fun and somehow gained interests in pursuing a business career someday." - Bulacan State University student

"It helps young entrepreneurs to be prepared for the challenges that they may encounter in the future." - Polytechnic University of the Philippines student

"Now I know the interrelations of different variables that will affect our business." - Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology student

"Expand the whole activity in the Philippines." - University of Makati student

"I learned a lot, it compressed my four years study on management." - Araullo University student

Trading resumes today

From page B1

P783 million ($14.4 million).

The all-shares index fell 6.18 points to 1,274.42.

The market's breadth, however, remained positive, as gainers beat losers 42 to 38, with 43 stocks unchanged.

Globe Telecom, the most actively traded stock, closed down P10 to P785, while rival PLDT fell P10 to P1,735.

Bank of the Philippine Islands was down 50 centavos to P58.50 and parent Ayala Corp. retreated P7.50 to P340. *AFP*

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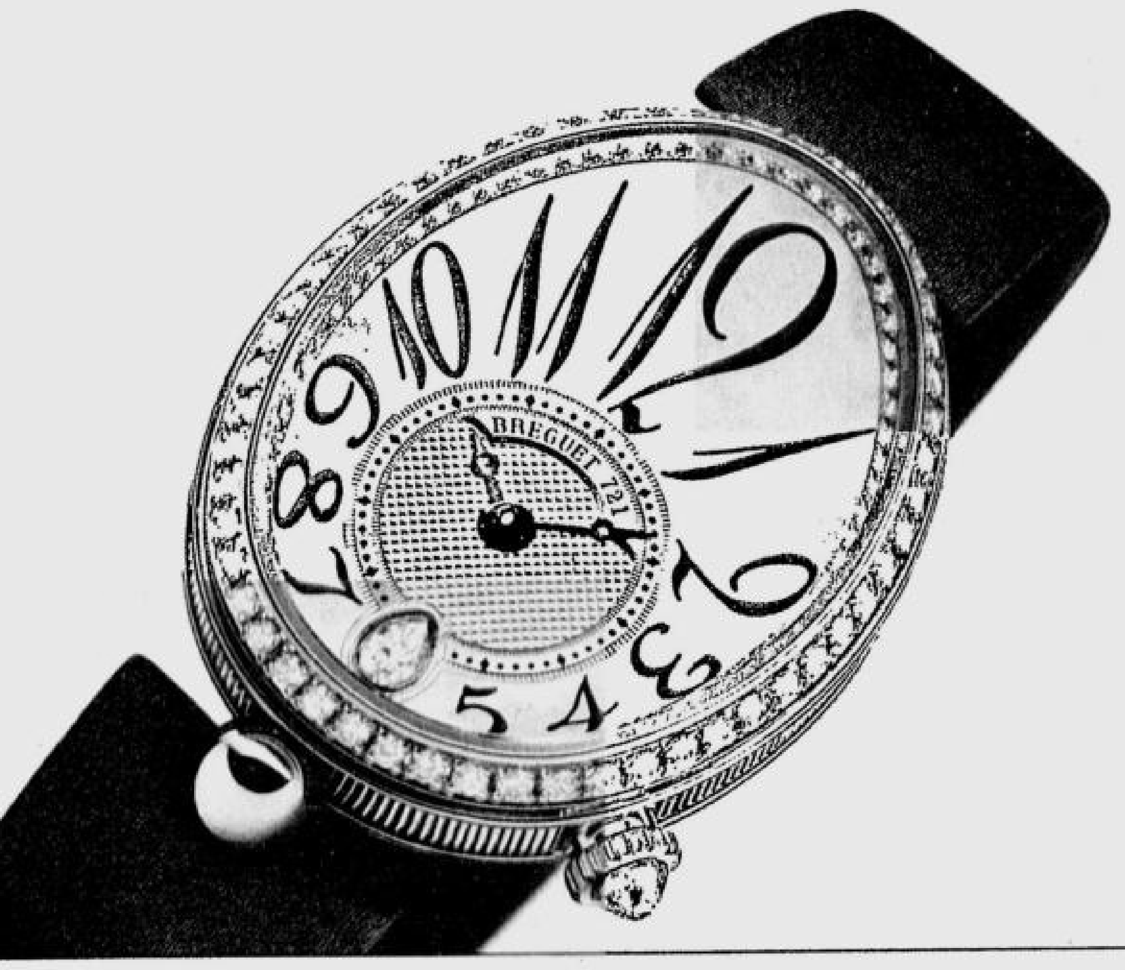

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Whining streak

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THIS LITTLE EXCITEMENT IN THE STOCK market, according to stockbrokers, has something to do with the EVAT law—you know, the "expanded value-added tax."

Under the law, a 2-percentage point addition to the old VAT rate is coming to you and me via this cute administration of Gloriaetta this February.

Thanks partly to the expanded VAT, the brokers say, the market is now on a winning streak. Well, the market is posting P1 billion worth of trades a day.

Now, more than half of it comes from abroad. We are looking at less than a P500-million "excitement" stirred up by the locals.

That's not even one percent of one percent of the economy!

And mind you, whatever little excitement there is in the market, actually, comes from a TAX. The VAT is really just a license for the government to get your money.

Apparently, stock investors were only waiting to give their money away, particularly to the government.

* * *

SUPPOSEDLY, the VAT is good for the financial markets. Even the peso's exchange rate is behaving. And so government finance guys are beside themselves with glee.

It is, I am afraid, going to be a fleeting thing. The markets reacted kindly to the VAT because the tax could ease the budget problem of this cute, broke administration.

Sooner or later, the reality of higher taxes must set in, and in business, a high "sales tax" is always not good for ... well, sales. Hellooo!

Thus, the novelty of the VAT will soon wear off for the investors.

That's why the stock market must find its way back to that promising beginning of an uptrend before it was rudely interrupted by the "Hello Garci" scandal.

What it really needs these days is a shot in the arm in the form of good healthy companies doing IPOs. It has suffered long enough from a dearth in listings.

This year, for instance, only SM Investments (c/o Henry "Tatang" Sy) and Manila Water (c/o Ayala group) did IPOs. Neither created a lot of stir, actually.

* * *

LOOK, bossing, if we must talk of excitement, the market is already abuzz with the planned IPO of this company called First Gen. The First what?

Well, for the sake of your mother-in-law, let me explain that it is a power generation company under the Lopez group's First Philippine Holdings, which is the energy unit of the group.

From the top of my head, this company should own at least four power plants, namely the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita plant, the 500-megawatt San Lorenzo (Batangas) gas-fired plant, the 225-megawatt diesel plant in La Union, and the 1.6-megawatt mini hydro in Agusan.

Also, well ... that's about it!

Why then did PSE president Francis Lim, talking to newsmen about the IPO of First Gen, get a little excited—but not in the carnal sense?

Good heavens, the PSE is not even promoting it. Come on, really, do you hear anything about it?

All is quiet on the business front except for the whining streak of the richest guys in the country over oil prices, wage increases, too much politics, graft and corruption.

* * *

LISTINGS are always good for the market. That's why the market is dying for the listing of companies like Pagcor, which as a casino monopoly always makes money, or sleeping giants like GMA-7 and even Unilab.

When this market saw any boom in the past, somehow it came from something new—from enthusiasm over mining, oil drilling, or real estate.

From what sector the boom will come from this time, nobody can tell as yet. Everybody just agrees that it's got to be some new listings. This market needs more IPOs. Make that "good" IPOs!

Like it or not, this market still has rather limited investment choices. You have San Miguel, PLDT and ... well, let me see ... that's about it.

In the market, they are saying that even the stellar performer Ayala Land is having a little financial difficulty due to rapid expansion. Imagine that—Ayala?

And so, everybody is looking for signs of the next sector that can incite the market to its next boom. But what will it be? It can't be the CPR, for sure.

* * *

SOME thought the Epira law on the power sector reforms gave a little clue, since the law forces the stock market listing of the equivalent of 15 percent of the shares of energy companies.

"By next year," the law even specifies.

The law has such a provision for a reason. The latest Top 1,000 Corporations (for 2004) showed that the state monopoly Napocor is still the biggest corporation here, with more than P177 billion in revenues.

Energy is big business, in short, and as such, energy companies need a lot of capital. Look, they are already forecasting a power shortage by 2008.

And so it's like the lawmakers see symbiosis between the market and the energy sector. In the language of romance, they are meant for each other.

The market actually needs the listing of energy companies for livelier trading, while the energy companies need an active market to raise billions in capital.

That First Gen, for instance, wants to issue $200 million worth of stocks. That's P10 billion right there. You do not find P10 billion just lying around the living room.

Yet, despite the Epira order for listing, no energy business (Shell's Malampaya venture, for instance) has come forward except that First Gen.

And they are saying we are going to have a power shortage in a couple of years.

PNCC seeks to hike . . .

From page B1

an interview. "This is in line with a 12-percent return-on-rate base."

State-owned PNCC is the sole franchise holder of all toll roads in the country. Lack of funds had forced the PNCC to enter into agreement with private road developers, as in the case of the North Luzon Expressway and Skyway.

About 150,000 motorists use the Slex. Also, more than half of North Luzon's produce pass through the expressway for delivery to South Luzon provinces.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 25, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34.5	34.5	34	34.5	401,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59	59	58.5	58.5	693,600
China Banking Corp.	610	610	610	610	350
Citystate Savings Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	600
Export And Ind. Bank Inc.	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	600,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	55	55	54.5	55	224,300
International Exch. Bank	21.25	21.25	21.25	21.25	5,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32	31	31.5	1,877,900
Philippine National Bank	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	5,100
Phil. Savings Bank	34	34	34	34	100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	18,000
Security Bank Corp.	35	35	34	34	104,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	3,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3100	3110	3100	3100	1,010
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2170	2110	2170	3,980
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	54,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.92	0.93	1,770,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	770	785	770	785	145,080
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.55	3.2	3.4	883,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.049	0.05	5,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	900,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	546,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1740	1740	1730	1735	64,400
Ivantage Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	500,000
Philweb Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	256,200,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.25	171,300
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	23.25	23	23	292,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	49,000
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.25	4.25	2,333,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	144,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	2,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.5	9.7	9.5	9.6	192,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68	2,040,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	130,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.65	3.8	3.65	3.8	6,196,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	6,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	44,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	17,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	40	40	39.5	39.5	123,400
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.85	8,869,000
RFM Corp.	0.71	0.74	0.69	0.74	400,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	63.5	64.5	102,500
San Miguel Corp. B	88.5	89.5	88.5	88.5	69,300
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	16,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	320,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	345	345	337.5	340	101,450
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.9	875,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	4,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	20,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	69,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.82	0.86	0.82	0.84	2,480,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.5	55,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	750,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	4,066,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.91	1	0.9	0.99	1,260,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	30,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	8,100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	1,218,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	2,000,000
F&J Princ.e Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	50	50.5	49.5	50.5	540,400
House Of Investments Inc.	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	700,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.65	3.7	1,618,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	35,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	517,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1,160,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	4,940,000
Paxys Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	1,102,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	733,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	248	246	248	120,950
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.3	6,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	500,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	25,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	220,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	7	7	7	7	5,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	3,963,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	316,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.34	3,200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	845,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	38,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.7	4,814,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	1,154,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	3,070,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.23	0.225	0.225	900,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	6,590,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	2,748,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	240,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.13	970,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	793,000
SM Development Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.7	2,962,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	11,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.3	1,132,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	90,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.225	2,790,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.25	18,650,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	253,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	158,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	80,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	3,114,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	3,922,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	1,336,700
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	570,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	49,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	47,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	4.1	3.8	4	589,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.14	0.14	9,700,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	910,000

CURRENCIES

November 25, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.848248	1.000000	54.2390
Japan	Yen	0.007134	0.008410	0.4561
United Kingdom	Pound	1.461617	1.723100	93.4592
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.109419	0.128994	6.9965
Switzerland	Franc	0.644713	0.760052	41.2245
Canada	Dollar	0.724009	0.853534	46.2948
Singapore	Dollar	0.501863	0.591646	32.0903
Australia	Dollar	0.626013	0.738007	40.0288
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.250533	2.653153	143.9044
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.226194	0.266660	14.4634
Brunei	Dollar	0.500383	0.589901	31.9956
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000100	0.0054
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UAE	Dirham	0.230947	0.272264	14.7673
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.178900	63.9424
Argentina	Peso	0.288275	0.339847	18.4330
Brazil	Real	0.379920	0.447888	24.2930
Denmark	Kroner	0.134083	0.158070	8.5736
India	Rupee	0.018569	0.021891	1.1873
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.224553	0.264725	14.3584
Mexico	New Peso	0.079957	0.094261	5.1126
New Zealand	Dollar	0.588000	0.693193	37.5981
South Africa	Rand	0.129660	0.152856	8.2908
Korea	Won	0.000819	0.000966	0.0524
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025370	0.029909	1.6222

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Gokongwei group to expand sugar facilities in Negros

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE GOKONGWEI group is set to invest roughly $40 million in the expansion of its sugar manufacturing facilities in Negros as part of plans to solidify its position in the beverage market.

The Gokongwei group will become the country's third biggest sugar company once expansion is completed.

JG Summit Holdings Inc. president Lance Gokongwei said the group would more than double the production capacity of its sugar mill under Southern Negros Development Co. (Sonedco) from 4,000 tons of cane a day to 9,000 tons of cane a day.

Sonedco is a wholly owned subsidiary of Universal Robina Corp., the group's branded food unit.

Gokongwei said the group was also setting up a refinery that can produce 15,000 bags of sugar a day.

He said the refinery was scheduled to be completed in 2006, to be followed by the mill expansion by 2007.

"We think sugar has a very bright future, and we will get to use a lot of it ourselves because of the growth in the beverage business, with the integrated business model of URC," Gokongwei said.

The JG Summit Group is also studying the possibility of putting up an ethanol distillery to take advantage of the product's demand as a fuel additive.

NTC eyes new telco policy

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is preparing a new competition policy that would impose stricter rules on big telecommunications companies.

The NTC, in a draft of the competition policy to be circulated this week, admitted that based on the "massive underutilized infrastructure and the debt burden amassed by Philippine carriers, entry and competition could have been managed more effectively."

To address the imbalance in the market that had spawned "some forms of abuses and unfair practices" among large players, the NTC said that it might impose a more stringent set of rules on players controlling the market, while allowing the smaller ones to operate under minimum regulation.

The NTC said policy reforms were necessary to promote competition and introduce safeguards "to protect non-dominant providers against the unreasonable exercise of market power by dominant providers."

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

IN THE MATTER OF PETITION FOR REHABILITATION WITH PRAYER FOR THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS AND ACTIONS AGAINST PETITIONER

SP PROC. NO. Q-05-127

EPIXTAR PHILIPPINES IT-ENABLED SERVICES CORPORATION, Petitioner.
x-----------------------x

STAY ORDER

Before this Court is a verified Amended Petition for corporate rehabilitation with prayer for a Stay Order filed by the above-named petitioner. In its Order dated November 11, 2005, this Court deemed the Amended Petition submitted for resolution.

Briefly, the petitioner alleges that it had incurred substantial losses in 2003 and 2004 and that it has the ability to pay this capital deficit within a period of three (3) years beginning in 2007 after a debt moratorium of one year in 2006 pursuant to its proposed rehabilitation plan. The petitioner projects revenues of PhP693,632,471.00 in 2006, PhP979,020,000.00 in 2007, PhP1,279,187,368.00 in 2008, and PhP1,647,567,158.00 in 2009. Consequently, the petitioner prays for the issuance of a Stay Order pending proceedings before this Court.

A careful examination of the Amended Petition shows that the same conforms substantially with Section 2, Rule 4 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation (*see also* Supreme Court Resolution en banc in A.M. No. 00-8-10-SC). This Court therefore finds the Amended Petition to be sufficient in form and substance.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, this Court issued a Stay Order, in accordance with Section 6, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules, as follows:

1.) Appointing Atty. Danilo L. Concepcion as rehabilitation receiver who shall be considered as an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The rehabilitation receiver must post a bond of PhP 500,000.00 before entering upon his powers, duties and functions and must take an oath, as provided under Section 15, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The petitioner is directed to serve immediately a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Atty. Danilo L. Concepcion who shall manifest his acceptance or non-acceptance of his appointment not later than five (5) days from his receipt hereof;

2.) Staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or otherwise, against the petitioner, and its guarantors and sureties not solidarily liable with the petitioner including the staying of proceedings of collection cases filed against petitioner, and the staying of the enforcement/implementation of application/s for extra-judicial foreclosure sale/s and actual foreclosure sale/s, if any, against the real and personal properties of the petitioner;

3.) Prohibiting the petitioner from selling, encumbering, transferring, or disposing in any matter any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business;

4.) Prohibiting the petitioner from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of the filing of the petition on October 7, 2005;

5.) Prohibiting the suppliers of the petitioner from withholding supply of goods and services in the ordinary course of business for as long as the petitioner makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order;

6.) Directing the petitioner to pay in full all administrative expenses incurred after the issuance of this Stay Order;

The initial hearing on the Amended Petition is set on December 6, 2005 (Tuesday) at 2:00 P.M. at the session room of Branch 90 of this Court located at the Ground Floor of the Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall Complex, Quezon City. In the event the initial hearing does not push through for any reason like there is no work on said date, the hearing shall be reset to December 8, 2005 (Thursday) at 2:00 P.M. All creditors and all interested parties including the Securities and Exchange Commission are directed to file with this Court and serve upon the petitioner a verified comment on or opposition to the Amended Petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing as set forth above, and they are put on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating in the proceedings before this Court. All creditors and all interested parties are further directed to secure from this Court copies of the Amended Petition and its annexes within such time as to enable them to file their verified comment on or opposition thereto and to prepare them for the initial hearing and to attain this purpose, the petitioner is ordered to file with this Court initially twenty (20) additional copies of the Amended Petition and its annexes within ten (10) days from receipt hereof.

The petitioner is furthermore directed by this Court to have a copy of this Order published in the business section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, The Philippine Star, and one other newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines chosen by raffle if it is a newspaper other than the herein-named newspaper, considering the probable presence of numerous creditors and interested parties, once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least seven (7) days prior to the date of initial hearing as set forth above, at the expense of the petitioner.

Ms. Sylvia Joy D. Corrales, OIC, Branch Clerk of Court, is ordered to see to it that the Process Server shall serve immediately copies of this Stay Order upon: 1) Atty. Canna Lenore Sumilong Bayon (the corporate secretary and duly authorized representative of the petitioner), 5th Floor, Epixtar House, 5 Eastwood Avenue, Eastwood City, Cyberpark, No. 188 E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue, Bagumbayan, Quezon City; 2) Atty. Rafael E. Khan, Siguion Reyna Montecillo & Ongsiaco (counsel for the petitioner), 4th and 6th Floors, Citibank Center, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City; 3) Atty. Danilo L. Concepcion (the rehabilitation receiver), Lena Subdivision, Valenzuela City; and 4) the Honorable Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA (Epifanio De Los Santos Avenue), Mandaluyong City.

SO ORDERED.
Quezon City, November 14, 2005.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO B. DAWAY, C.P.A.
Presiding Judge

P.S. Nov. 22 & 29, 2005

Gov't seen to junk tax-free corn import proposal

Feed millers urged to use alternative raw materials

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT IS INCLINED to reject the duty-free importation of corn as requested by private feed millers because substitutes can be imported at relatively low prices, Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban said.

The Philippine Association of Feed Millers had urged the government to allow imports of 100,000 tons of yellow corn duty-free in view of the shortfall in local production.

Panganiban said there were several factors that had to be considered before allowing such a move, including how farm gate prices would be affected and the availability of alternative raw materials such as wheat.

Panganiban said he had assigned the Rice and Corn Multisectoral Task Force to study the request of feed millers.

"Corn is now quite expensive in the world market but feed wheat, which is used as a corn substitute, is priced more competitively," said Bureau of Agricultural Statistics director Romeo Recide.

Recide said another option would be to buy corn through the National Food Authority, which sells corn at lower prices.

"We are preventing a situation where farmers will be discouraged to plant again," said Recide.

According to Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc. president Antonio R. Moraza, the tight corn supply situation has raised corn prices at the farmgate to P10.50 per kilo from only P8.

In a letter to Panganiban dated Nov. 3, Moraza said the prices of corn from General Santos City would end up higher when they reached Luzon due to transport costs, ranging from P1,300 to P1,500 per metric ton.

"It is in this regard that we request the government to import 100,000 metric tons of corn duty-free for the feed milling industry," said Moraza.

He said the imports should be brought in between December and January.

Teletech putting up new unit

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Teletech Holdings Inc., a multinational provider of customer management and transaction-based business process outsourcing (BPO) solutions, said it would open a customer management center (CMC) here next year.

"Our business planning team believes that additional expansion in the Philippines will be best supported in the provinces," Craig Reines, vice president and general manager of Teletech's Philippine unit, said in a statement.

Reines said the firm was now working with the local governments of the regions eyed for its expansion activities.

Aside from the Dumaguete expansion, Teletech is also setting up another CMC in Metro Manila.

With the additional capacity, TeleTech expects to employ more than 7,000 professionals in the Philippines by the second half of 2006, positioning the company as one of the largest employers among outsourced services providers in the country.

Looking ahead, TeleTech expects the new business will support additional growth, and plans to continue to significantly increase employment in the country through 2007, Reines said.

"TeleTech is very optimistic that the Philippines will continue to provide high quality solutions and value for our clients," said Ken Tuchman, chair and chief executive officer.

"Its highly educated workforce and advanced telecom infrastructure make it a very attractive location for TeleTech to expand its English language capabilities," he said.

Javier Fortunato Jr., provincial director of the Department of Trade and Industry in Oriental Negros, hailed the announcement of Teletech as the fruit of the department's efforts to position the province as an alternative site for Information Communication Technology (ICT) business.

Teletech will be the second multinational ICT in Oriental Negros in a span of 12 months, in addition to the SPI Publisher Services, operating in the town of Bacong.

The Teletech site in Dumaguete City will be located in Barangay Calindagan.

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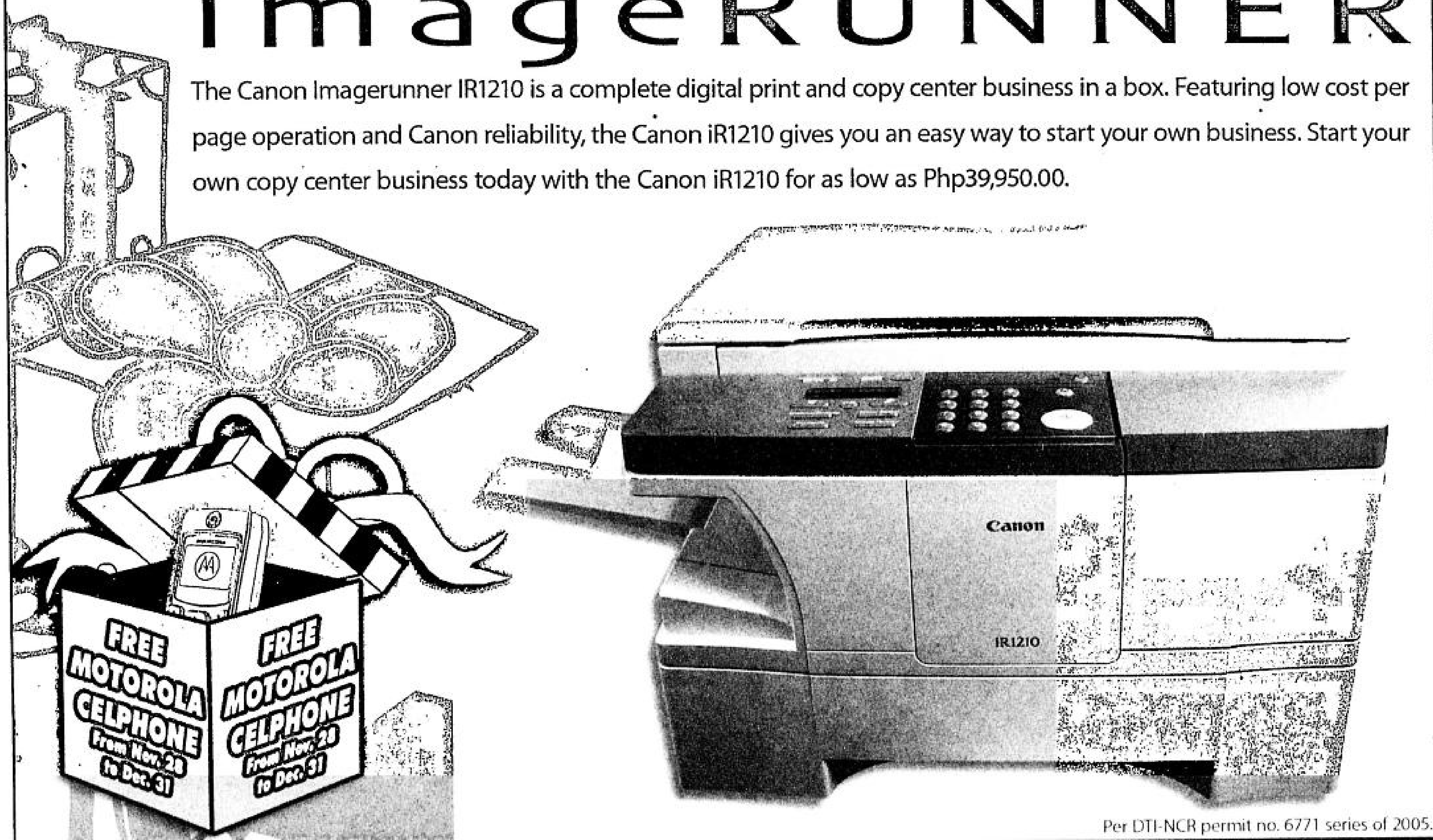
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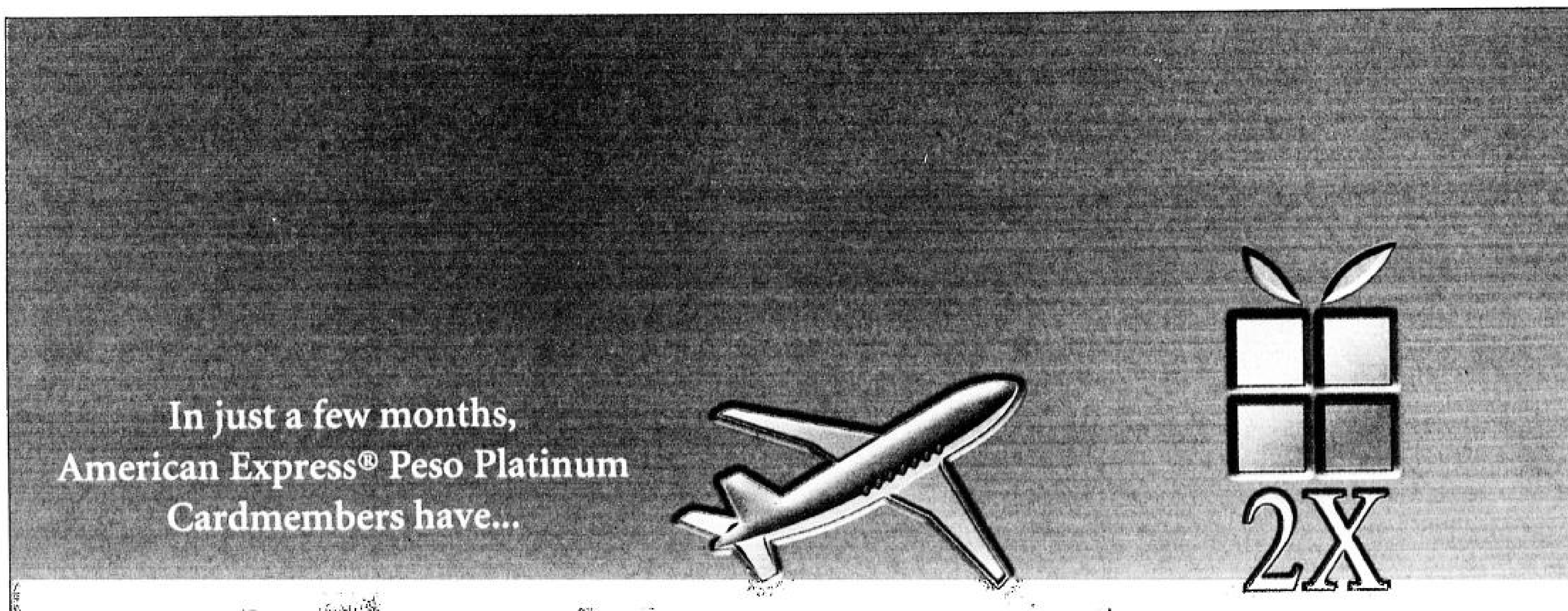
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FirstGen eyes gov't steam power plants

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FIRST GENERATION CORP., THE HOLDING company of the Lopez family for its power generation business, is studying plans to bid for the government's geothermal plants in Albay and Laguna/Batangas, which have a combined power generation capacity of 700 megawatts.

Industry sources said First Gen had already secured the necessary bidding documents from the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) for evaluation.

Sources said the bidding might take place in December, although this could not be immediately confirmed with PSALM.

Last September, PSALM issued an invitation to investors interested in bidding for the government's geothermal assets consisting of the 275-MW Tiwi geothermal power plant in Tiwi, Albay, and the 425.73-MW MakBan geothermal power plant in Laguna and Batangas.

Interested parties are required to submit a letter of interest to PSALM with their latest audited financial statements. Prospective bidders are given up to Dec. 5 to conduct due diligence on the assets. They are also required to post a bid security equivalent to $9 million, in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit.

First Gen is now preparing for the public offering that will be held either before the end of the year or in the first quarter of next year to raise P11 billion.

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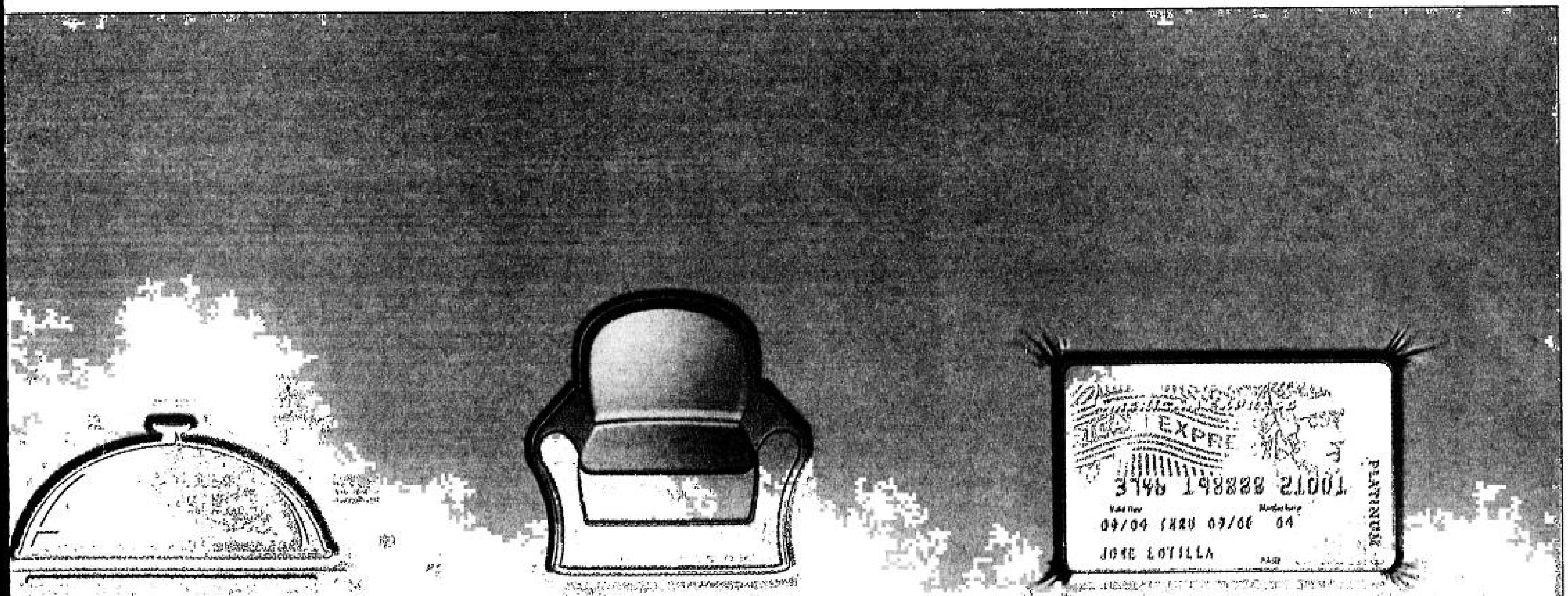

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2005 Afes Congress in Manila

THE 2005 CONGRESS OF THE Asean Federation of Endocrine Societies (Afes) will be held from Dec. 7 to 10, at the Philippine International Convention center, Cultural Center Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, Metro Manila.

The co-organizers of this international event, namely, the Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism (PSEM) and the Philippine Diabetes Association (PDA) are inviting local general practitioners and internists to participate in this 2005 Afes Congress; and to take advantage of its quality first-rate interdisciplinary program and wealth of information which will help advance the knowledge of researchers and clinicians in the field of endocrinology.

With a working theme "Linking Molecular and Clinical Endocrinology," the program lists the foremost international and Philippine experts on endocrinology as speakers in various plenary and "Meet The Expert" sessions, as well as during the industry sponsored breakfast, lunch and dinner symposia.

The topics of the 2005 AFES Congress cover most common disorders like diabetes and goiters and modern lifestyle diseases such as obesity, elevated cholesterol levels, abnormal menstrual function, menopause, osteoporosis and hypertension which all fall under the clinical spectrum of the specialty. Endocrinology is the study of hormones from the different glands of the body that regulate reproduction, growth and development and energy balance.

Also, several social events are lined up to welcome the delegates and share with them the fiesta spirit the Filipino way during the Afes opening ceremonies (Dec. 7) and the gala night (Dec. 8). The fellowship night (Dec. 9) at the Coconut Palace will feature presentations by various member countries -- an Afes tradition that started in Manila ten years ago.

Local and foreign delegates to the 2005 Afes Congress will also have a chance to win a trip for two to HongKong Disneyland on the last day, Dec. 10. The raffle prize includes free air fares and accommodations.

This will be the third time that the Philippines will host the biennial Afes Congress, the first and second having been in 1987 and 1995, respectively.

Registration is now ongoing. For more information, please contact the 2005 Afes Congress secretariat at 633-6420, 637-3162, 531-1278, 534-9559, 632-1533; by e-mail at afes2005@pldtdsl.net or psem@info.com.ph; or register on line through our website at http://afes2005.diabetesphil.org.

WORLD POKER TOUR PHILIPPINES IN ABS-CBN'S STUDIO 23

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Network will soon air the Philippines' own version of the popular World Poker Tour following the signing of a memorandum of agreement with World Poker Tour Enterprises Inc (WPTEI). Broadcasted in 116 countries, the Philippines is the first country outside of the United States to have a seat in this championship. The televised mainstream of spectator sport expected to draw a huge shift in a number of people playing, will be aired on Studio 23 this coming December. Shown in photo are (from left) WPTE chief financial officer William Todd Steele; WPTE co-founder and executive vice president Robyn Moder; ABS-CBN chair Eugenio Lopez III; WPTE general counsel Adam Pliska; ABS-CBN president Luisito Alejandro; and ABS-CBN vice president for radio and sports Peter Musngi.

PeopleSupport now IATA accredited

PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES) INC, AN OFF-shore business process outsourcing (BPO) provider that offers customer management and accounts receivable management services for US-based clients from its facilities in the Philippines, recently received its accreditation from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The accreditation makes PeopleSupport the first BPO provider in the Philippines to be accredited with the IATA and makes the company a true travel expert.

"We are very honored to be accredited by the IATA as this will surely benefit all our employees and their families," said Bong Borja, president of PeopleSupport Philippines. "This is a recognition of our contribution to the tourism industry."

IATA was founded in Havana, Cuba in April 1945 and is the prime vehicle for inter-airline cooperation in promoting safe, reliable, secure and economical air services for the benefit of the world's consumers. With IATA accreditation, PeopleSupport is now an internationally-recognized travel expert and is authorized to sell and issue international and domestic airline tickets at discounted prices to qualified employees and their dependents. In addition to discounted airline tickets, employees are entitled to discounted hotel rates, discounts in selected restaurants and duty free shops, perks from airlines and visa and passport processing.

"Agents who are employed by PeopleSupport as travel e-reps will receive additional benefits because of our accreditation with IATA," Borja said. "PeopleSupport is one of the biggest local employers in the travel industry with over 2,000 travel professionals under our employ." Normally, only the executives of IATA-accredited companies are the ones who are given IATA privilege cards. In PeopleSupport's case, all qualified travel employees will be issued an IATA privilege card which is recognized in 175 countries worldwide. "Initially, we will be asking IATA to provide us with over 1,000 cards so that our qualified employees can start enjoying the benefits and perks that come with IATA accreditation," he said.

PeopleSupport is one of the country's largest contact centers with a reputation for giving first-rate employee benefits, aside from attractive basic compensation, to their almost 4,000 employees. Aside from the IATA benefits that their employees will soon enjoy, they are the only BPO company offering stock options to all regular employees. They recently made a splash with the inauguration of the very first specially-designed fully dedicated e-services facility, the PeopleSupport Center. For inquiries on career opportunities, call 755-2600 or visit www.peoplesupport.com.

PHILIPPINE CHAPTER ASIAN-AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FUNCTIONAL ORTHODONTICS AND TMJ

AAAFOT CELEBRATES 14TH ANNIVERSARY, COMMENCEMENT EXERCISE

The Asian-American Academy of Functional Orthodontics and TMJ (AAAFOT) had its 14th Anniversary and Commencement Exercise last October 2005 at the Crowne Plaza Ortigas, Pasig City. Shown are (center) Dr. Pablo Fondialan (director), Dr. Lolita Flores- Fondialan (adviser/lecturer) with Dr. Joe Mordeno as guest speaker. Organizers: Dr. Ann Gantuangco-Gutierrez, Dr. Menchu dela Cruz, Dr. Marivic Estrella, Dr. Cristy Golayan.

AFP personnel complete Grepalife, Malayan livelihood training program

SEVERAL ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) recently completed livelihood courses as part of the "Alay sa Bayan," a technical education assistance program initiated by Malayan Insurance and Grepalife. Both firms are members of the Yuchengco Group of Companies.

Held as part of the two companies' joint anniversary celebrations this year, the livelihood training programs covered courses on Commercial Bread-making /Bakery Management, How to Transfer Photo/Designs on Ceramics, Glassware and Plasticware, Basic Meat Processing and Therapeutic Massage Applications.

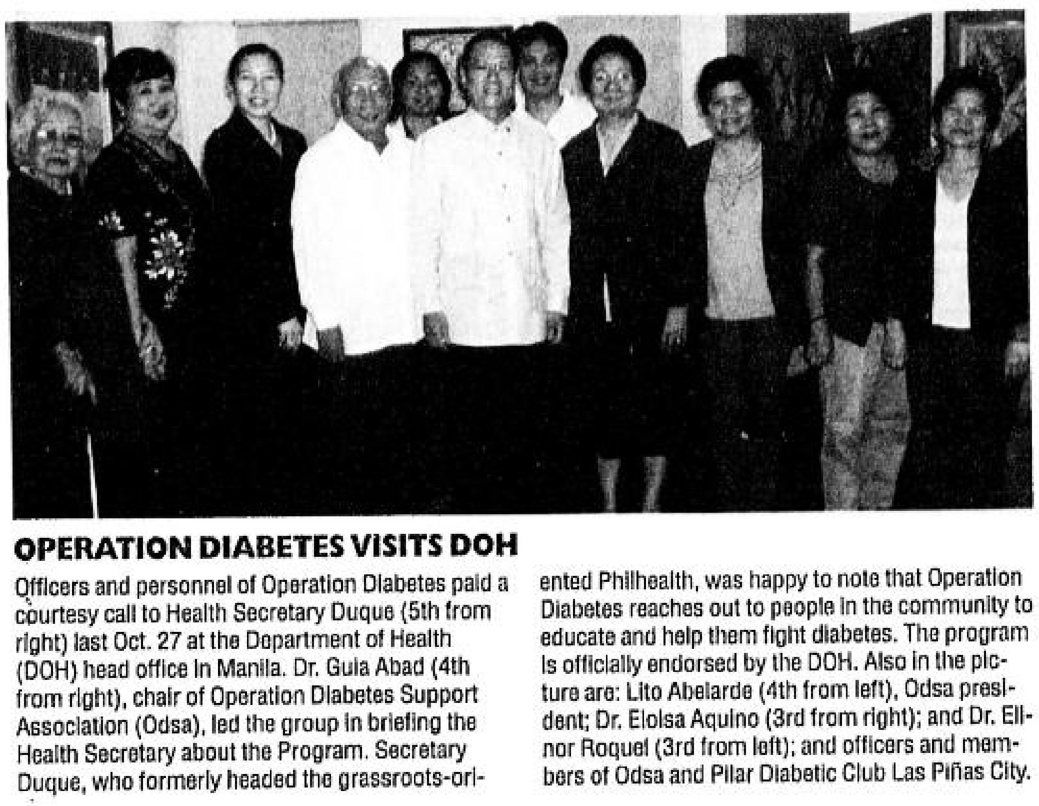
Malayan Insurance first vice president, Ma. Vicenta Magno-Alcid, described the program's objective as "helping equip AFP personnel - particularly soldiers with disabilities incurred in the line of duty - with the necessary skills and training for venturing into gainful enterprises when they are discharged from service and reintegrated into society's mainstream." Over 230 attendees benefited from "Alay sa Bayan" in the course of the year.

Speaking for the benefactor companies, Grepalife executive vice president Edgardo Franco underscored the importance of providing the recipients with livelihood opportunities after the completion of their service to the country.

Malayan Insurance, the country's leading non-life insurer, and Grepalife, one of the biggest life insurance companies in the country, jointly celebrated their 75th and 50th anniversaries respectively early this year. Also supporting "Alay sa Bayan" were the AY Foundation and the Technology and Livelihood Resource Center that provided the training.

SPC-QC CORAL CLASS BATCH '82 HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

St. Paul College, Quezon City Coral Class Batch '82 High School Reunion was held recently at the Acacia Room, Greenhills. The reunion was in preparation for their 25th High School Reunion in year 2007. Shown are (seated from left): Lizette Perez, Marnie Cordova, Shirley Perez, Gloria Igaya, Agnes Inocencio and Teresa Ramos; (standing from left) Mylene Sazon, Cristina Cabitac, Cecille Oreta, Leah Nuyda, Irene Gelle, Beng Abella, Esther Santos, Janet Perez and Marites Arnaiz.



OPERATION DIABETES VISITS DOH

Officers and personnel of Operation Diabetes paid a courtesy call to Health Secretary Duque (5th from right) last Oct. 27 at the Department of Health (DOH) head office in Manila. Dr. Guia Abad (4th from right), chair of Operation Diabetes Support Association (Odsa), led the group in briefing the Health Secretary about the Program. Secretary Duque, who formerly headed the grassroots-oriented Philhealth, was happy to note that Operation Diabetes reaches out to people in the community to educate and help them fight diabetes. The program is officially endorsed by the DOH. Also in the picture are: Lito Abelarde (4th from left), Odsa president; Dr. Eloisa Aquino (3rd from right); and Dr. Elinor Roquel (3rd from left); and officers and members of Odsa and Pilar Diabetic Club Las Piñas City.

ProductFILES

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Hotdog for burger-lovers

BURGER-BUFFS, PRETZEL-LOVERS AND hotdog fans will all have something to enjoy as Ministop introduces the Burger Pretzel Dog. It's the lip-smacking goodness of a burger, a pretzel, and a hotdog all in one delicious package. Burger Pretzel Dog is a juicy and meaty hotdog bursting with real grilled burger taste. It is wrapped in a delectable pretzel bread to complete that delightful burger-hotdog combination. This is the newest addition to Ministop's hot dog line which includes cheese and chorizo. Served hot and fresh, Burger Pretzel Dog can be enjoyed for only P32. This treat is available 24-hours a day in all Ministop stores. So head to your nearest Ministop branch and satisfy your burger-pretzel-hotdog craving!

OVALTINE PARTNERS WITH QUIZ BEE FOUNDATION

With its thrust to promote well-rounded mental and physical advancement of the youth, Associated British Foods (Philippines) through Ovaltine Power has partnered with the Quiz Bee Foundation to be the exclusive presentor of the '26th National Super Quiz Bee Championships'. Associated British Foods is the maker of Ovaltine Power, the 'Official Health Drink' of the 26th National Super Quiz Bee. The Quiz Bee is telecast Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 1 p.m. on Studio 23. Shown in photo during the Caloocan and the Valenzuela-Malabon-Navotas division championships are: Ovaltine Power senior product manager Marco Torres, Caloocan champion Justine Brian Santoalla of St. Mary's Academy, Valmana champion Jason Aguanta of Colegio De Sta. Cecilia and Quiz Bee game master Anthony Suntay.

BEST INVESTMENT BANK

FinanceAsia

First Metro Investment Corp was named the Best Investment Bank and the Best Bond House in the Philippines by FinanceAsia magazine, one of the world's foremost information sources on the Asian financial markets, in its 2005 Country Awards for Achievement. The awards were presented during the gala dinner held recently in Singapore. In photo are (from left) First Metro Investment executive vice president Roberto Juanchito T. Dispo, First Metro Investment executive vice president Jose Pacifico E. Marcelo, FinanceAsia managing director and associate publisher Jonathan Hirst, and FinanceAsia chief executive officer and publisher Foster Wright.

NESTLÉ EMPLOYEES LEARN CORPORATE DRESSING

Going back to the basics was the focus of the Corporate Dressing, Styling and Grooming workshop held at the Nestlé Center in Makati. About 40 employees attended the session for an update on what's hot and what's not on corporate dressing. Adel Gabot of Manual Magazine and Jo Ann Camacho of Mega Magazine discussed the basics on the proper office wear for both men and women. The speakers also gave basic tips on shoe selection and accessorizing.

DBP to sell ₱13B worth of bad loans, idle assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT BANK of the Philippines plans to sell about P13 billion worth of bad loans and idle assets next year using the special purpose vehicle framework.

In a recent briefing, DBP president Reynaldo David said the disposal of non-performing loans and foreclosed assets would form part of the bank's major strategy in the coming year.

The bank had planned to take advantage of the SPV Act which offered incentives to banks disposing of their idle assets, but it did not have enough time to do so until the law expired in April. The Congress, however, is expected to extend the law for two more years.

Effort to bring down NPL ratio

Like the other banks that had disposed of their assets, DBP wants its non-performing- to -total loans ratio reduced to single-digit level, said David.

He said the bank was now bundling its NPLs into various asset pools, categorized in terms of quality and had auctioned off the contract for the financial adviser.

"Any sale will result in something very positive for the institution. If you have a peso of NPL and you're covered 1-to-1 (P1 provision for every P1 of bad loan), it is basically nil in your books (the bad loans or assets no longer weigh on the capital). If you sell that at 20-30 centavos, it's a major gain," David said.

But David said the collateral backing up the bank's bad loans were of good quality and that the NPLs could thus fetch higher prices.

The bank has about P8.8 billion worth of NPLs and P4.95 billion worth of real and other properties and acquired, the bulk of which would be disposed of using the SPV framework.

The bank president said the bank would like to see a sharp improvement in its asset quality. He said NPLs were now at P8.8 billion or lower than P9 billion last year, but this was mostly due to loan restructuring programs and asset foreclosures.

"As far as we are concerned, we're adequately covered. Our backs are covered. Our past due loans are covered with collateral," he said.

The SPV Law—which was passed in December 2002 and had expired in April this year—helped Philippine banks get rid of their non-performing assets by waiving some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets.

The law waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value added tax) and likewise reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

The banking system has unloaded some P95 billion worth of bad assets under the SPV mode.

Consumers gain slight confidence

From page B1

the results of the previous quarter, with the family financial situation index rising by 2.4 points, the level of family income index by 1.3 points, and economic condition index by 0.6 points, the BSP reported.

The latest survey was conducted by the BSP on Oct. 1-7. It covered a random sample size of 2,427 households in the National Capital Region, which yielded a response rate of 94.7 percent.

Respondents expected average family income to further contract in the fourth quarter, but at a slower pace than seen in the previous quarter. Household expenditures were expected to rise by an average of 6.2 percent by the first quarter of 2006.

Consumers expect higher costs of basic commodities, such as food, electricity, fuel, water and transportation, as well as clothing and footwear. They also see lower expenditures on house rent, education, communication, hotels and restaurants, medical care and personal care.

Buying conditions for the current quarter remain steady at 31.9 percent. The buying appetite for house and lot, and motor vehicles is on an uptrend.

Meanwhile, respondents expect the peso to depreciate in the last quarter up to the end of 2006., This was contrary to the local currency's actual strengthening in recent weeks.

"Consumer expectations for the first quarter of 2006 continued to be positive, supported by a better outlook in the level of family income, family financial situation and economic conditions of the country," the BSP said. "The view can be attributed to expectations of better macroeconomic fundamentals next year."

RP, Japan to start talks on loan programs soon

By Michelle V. Remo

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED to discuss loan programs for the Philippines for next year following the resolution of problems related to the tax refunds claimed by Japanese contractors and suppliers.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said the Japanese government would send a team before the end of the year or early next year to discuss with Philippine government representatives projects that could be funded by Japan official development assistance (ODA).

He said the government had lined up for the ODA projects involving improvement of access to electricity, development of major roads and highways, environmental protection, and irrigation.

The Japanese government, through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), is the country's biggest source of ODA.

He said the Philippine government had settled tax-refund problems encountered by Japanese contractors and suppliers engaged in the implementation of former Japanese-funded projects.

"The substantial amount of VAT refund claims, which had built up in the past because there were no allotments made by implementing agencies, have already been paid," Tan said. The government owed Japanese contractors and suppliers over P1 billion in VAT (value-added tax) refund claims.

Under the agreement between the two governments, Japanese contractors and suppliers for ODA-funded projects are exempted from taxes.

Under the old practice, Japanese suppliers and contractors should first pay the taxes as collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and later claim refunds from government agencies concerned with the implementation of the project.

The Japanese government had warned that it might stop granting the Philippines ODAs unless delays in the release of claims for tax refunds were resolved.

The Philippine government had proposed the issuance of tax credit checks to Japanese suppliers and contractors, which would be used to pay the BIR. This way, the Japanese firms will no longer have to shell out cash to pay the BIR.

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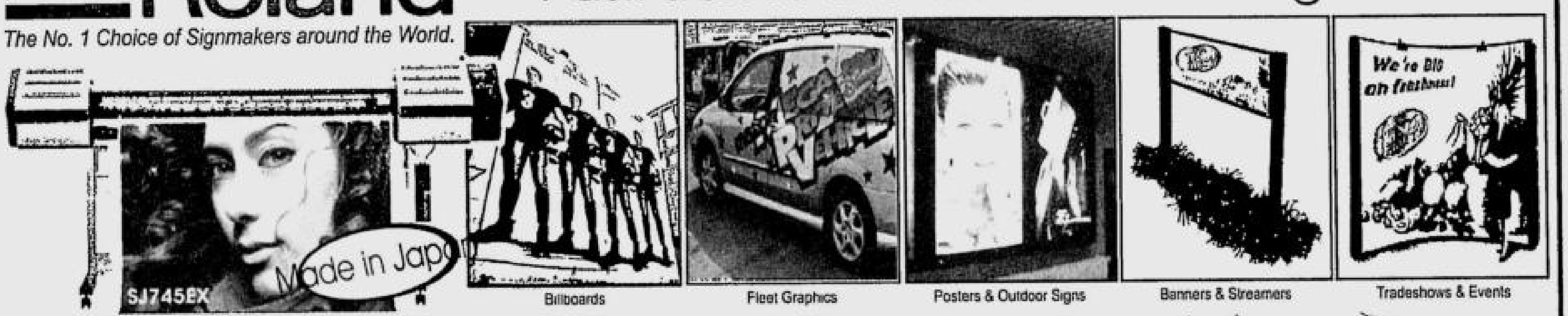

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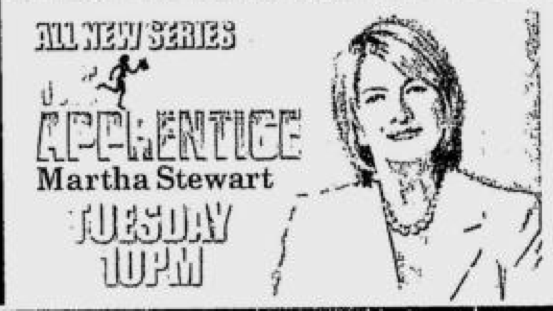

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ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		World Pool Trickshot Master				Sentro	Mumba Thriller					Big News	The Apprentice		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Kampanerang Kuba	Panday	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	Bora			Insider
AXN		Lost		Lost		Sports Disaster V		Amazon		The Outer Limits (Season IV)		The Amazing Race Family Edition		Worlds Apart		House		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Yogi Bear Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	What's New Scooby Doo?	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Codename Kids Next Door	Duck Dodgers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	The Looney Tunes Show		Johnny Bravo	Courage The Cowardly Dog	Mike, Lu & Og	Time Squad	Codename Kids Next Door	Duck Dodgers
Cinema One		Menika				Moral				Milan				John En Marsha Ngayon				Magnifico	
Cinemax			High Noon (3:45 PM)			A Few Good Men (5:15 PM)					Tempo (7:40 PM)			Boxing Point			Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle		
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
Discovery Channel		Altered Statesmen		Battleground: The Art Of War		Wild Science		Hyperspace With Sam Neil		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Deadliest Catch		Mostly True Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				Figure Skating		X-Games Files '04	ESPN Great Outdoor Games				Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia	Sportscenter Asia	NFL Football - Steelers @ Colts						Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	1 Hr Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		For Love Or Money		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord, Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil- Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Romanza	Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk		Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Darna	Encantadia	Sugo	Jewel In The Palace	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Wife Swap		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law II		Wife Swap		Wedding Daze			Agency II (10:35PM)		Family Law II (11:25PM)
HBO			Beverly Hills Ninja			Secondhand Lions			Sky Captain And The World Of Tomorrow				Anaconda			Rome Ep 03: An Owl In A Thornbush		Assassins	
IBC 13		EZ Shop		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Japan Video Topics		ME TV		SeaGames Special		King Of Adventure	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Family Guy	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Beat The Geeks	WWE Bottomline		WWE Afterburn		X-Play	Banzai	Mad TV		Trigger Happy TV	Primetime Glick	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Ren & Stimpy Adult Party Cartoon	Family Guy	Wwe Heat	
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixl	Mission: Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Diyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Advance Warning	Pimp My Ride	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
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National Geographic		7/7 Attack On London			The Airshow Miracle	Is It Real?		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster		Inside 911	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blue's Clues/What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Pagdating Ng Panahon				Oh Daddy				Power Of Two				Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga				Epifanio Ang Bilas Ko Na Eva
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Global Battle Of The Bands	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
SBN 21		New Life TV Shop						Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Music Video		Buhay Pinoy	
Solar Sports		Bacchus Bowling		Swatch FIVB World Women's Final Athens			Phil 9-Ball Open Day1					Sports Desk		NBA Game Magic @ Celtics					NBA Jam
Sports Plus			Golf Hawaii 2004	NFL 2005 Green Bay @ Philadelphia						FMX Best of FMX		Ultimate Fighting Championship				Party Poker.Com World Open 2005			
Star Movies		The Human [illegible] (3:19 PM)				Dance With Me (6:05 PM)				Agent Cody Banks (7:15 PM)				Eulogy			Welcome To Mooseport		
Star World	Booker/Miss World Asia Pacific Vote For Me Miss World Caribbean Vote For Me	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	Ed		Desperate Housewives		Tru Calling		Friends	Ed
Studio 23		Astroboy						Get Backers	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville	Point Pleasant		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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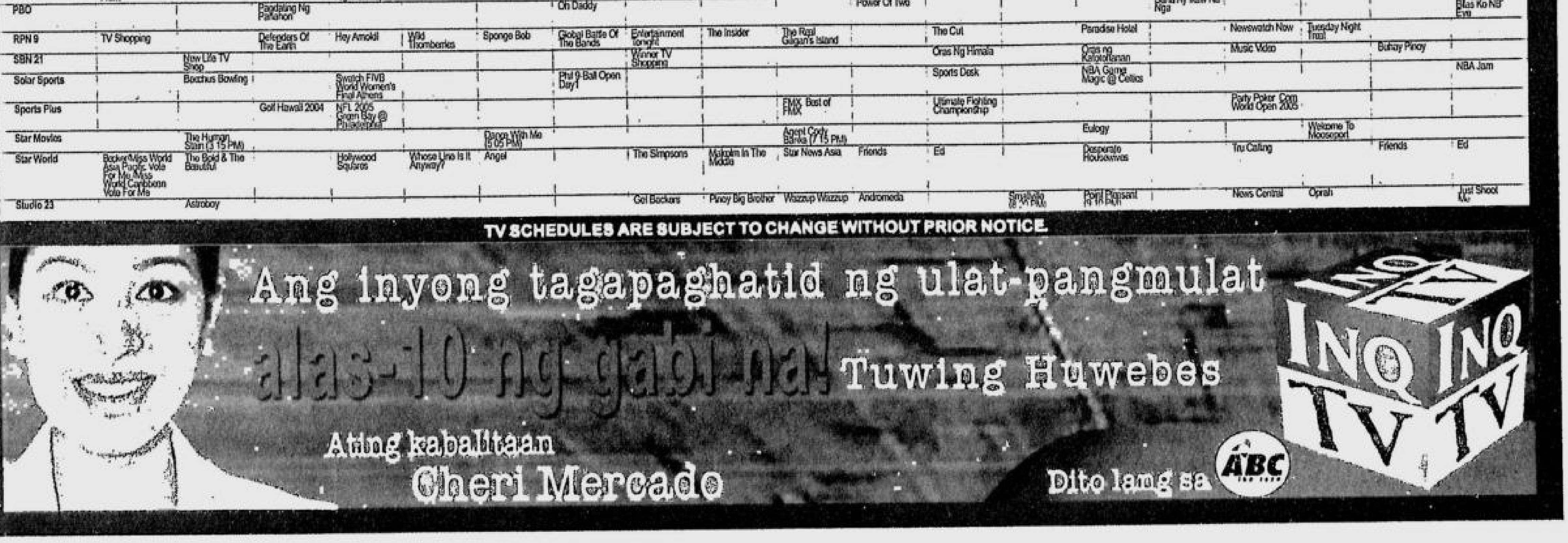
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How true or how accurate is the truth about predictions and imagination of man, and when can it be given the true knowledge being delivered by Brown Jakra and how can we discover about the different reasons about the events that happened here in our planet. Who can you turn to and how can you obtain help if you have a bigger or heavy problems that hamper you? In the depths of time, Master Ehbbo Rubio is offering his mission of service to all people who wanted to try his expertise and new style of giving solutions to all of your problems. He comes from the Bondoc Peninsula where he is an expert in studying the conditions of the world. You may call 428-3120 or at Cell no. (0918) 664-38-50 or 0917-8002101.

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-333	1 lot Supply and Delivery of the following: • 50 Metaframe Presentation Server, Enterprise Edition for Windows-x-1 Concurrent User Connection Pack with Subscription Advantage • 1 Metaframe Presentation Server 4.0 for Windows-English Mediakit • 1 CITRIX Standard Support Agreement - APAC	P 2,265,000.00	LBP Funds
2005-343	4 lots Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Various Alarm Devices at various branches of LANDBANK	17,582,000.00	LBP Funds

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bidding for the above requirements are scheduled on December 21, 2005 at 1:00 PM and pertinent Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 and P2,000.00 for ITB Nos. 2005-333 and 2005-343, respectively.**

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **December 8, 2005** at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to **Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).**

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI- Nov. 29 & Dec. 6, 2005)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ARCADIA R. IMPELIDO was extrajudicially settled with SPA on Nov.14, 2005 per Doc#12501, Page#1374, Book#15, Series of 2005 of Notary Public Danilo B. Bañares of Manila. (PDI-Nov. 22, 29 & Dec. 06, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Petron Corp. Stock Certificates 0035542, 00647010, 01177364 and 01396542 representing 3018 shares and issued from 1994 to 1997 in the name of Francisco Alcuaz Jr. were lost. If no contest received, new certificates will be issued (PDI-November 29, Dec. 6 & 13, 2005)

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ENT Head & Neck CONFAB set Nov 29-Dec 2

TO ADDRESS THE GROWING NUMBER of cancer affecting the head and neck areas in the country, the Philippine Society of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Inc. (PSOHNS) will banner the theme: "GRAB the CRAB!!! CRUSH Cancer!!! for its 49th Annual Convention on November 29 to December 2 at the Westin Philippine Plaza. Dr. Felix Nolasco, president of the society and Dr. Gil M. Vicente, the Overall Chair of this annual affair, said the mission of the convention is to lay down the foundation for a holistic approach by all specialists in the field in the management of head and neck cancer at a national level. Authorities in the field of head and neck cancer will lead the distinguished panel of lecturers and resource persons, among whom are Prof. Eugene Myers of the US, a world-renowned ENT oncologist, Prof. Ashok Shaha of Sloan Ketterring Memorial Medical Center, New York , and Prof. Kate Dinshaw of the International Atomic Energy Commission. Local faculty includes Drs. Corazon Ngelangel, renowned medical oncologist, Romulo de Villa, president of the Molecular Oncology Society of the Philippines and Jaime Galvez Tan, former Health Secretary. The event will also feature a press conference on the subject, breakfast lecture on "Coping and Living with Cancer" by Francis Kong, Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, founder of I Can Serve Foundation, opening ceremonies guest speaker. Inquiries can be made through the Secretariat, Tel. No. 633-8344.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

Elvira M. Valenzuela

Peacefully joined our Lord
on November 28, 2005 at the age of 63.

Her husband **Guillermo Sr.**, children **Jun** and **Lyn**, **Pong** and **Myrna**, **Gilbert** and **Edith**, **Vilma** and **Gilbert**; and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Chapel Q, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City.

Cremation will take place on Friday, December 2, 2005 at 8:00 a.m.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

VIRGINIA A. DEL CASTILLO

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on November 8, 2005

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

In Loving Memory

on the 20th Death Anniversary of

LUCIANO (ATO) M. SALAZAR

who joined his Creator on November 29, 1985.

His family requests the pious reader to pray for the repose of his soul.

Holy Masses will be offered in his memory at the following churches:

St. Michael the Archangel, Marilao, Bulacan	6:00 AM
Divine Mercy Shrine, Sta. Rosa, Marilao, Bulacan	6:30 AM
Immaculate Concepcion Parish, Sta. Maria, Bulacan	6:30 AM
Our Lady of Lourdes, Kanlaon, cor. Retiro, Q.C.	7:00 AM
Sto. Niño Church, Tondo, Manila	7:00 AM

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..." Psalm 23:4

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Province of La Union
Municipality of Bacnotan

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Land Reform (DLR) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that the part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract of Rural Infrastructure Component for which this invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is issued.

The Local Government of Bacnotan, through the Bids and Awards Committee (ABC) invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippines Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as "Small B" higher for similar contract to apply for eligibility and if found eligible to bid for the hereunder contract.

Name of Contract	Sipulo-Cabaroan Road Opening (FMR) with 2 RCDG Bridges
Location	Sipulo-Cabaroan, Bacnotan, La Union
Brief Description :	
Approved Budget Cost	P 8,175,442.19
Contract Duration	120 calendar days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	Dec. 06 – 13, 2005
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	Dec 06 – 13, 2005
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	Dec. 13, 2005
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	Dec. 16, 2005
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	Dec. 16 – 13, 2005
6. Pre-Bid Conference	Dec. 26, 2005
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	Jan. 10, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Office of the BAC Secretariat Bacnotan, La Union, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P 2,000.00 to the Municipality of Bacnotan, La Union Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 5,000.00 to the Municipality of Bacnotan, La Union Cashier.

The Municipality of Bacnotan, La Union assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) ENGR. ZALDY D. ALMOITE
BAC Chairman

(PDI-Nov. 21 & 29, 2005)

ECOP/PMS/Pag-Ibig Fund holds job fair

EMPLOYERS HAVE HEEDED THE call of Malacanang to do their share in helping alleviate poverty in the country by primarily confronting unemployment in the country.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is spearheading the holding of the Jobs Fair which kicks off today (Friday) at the Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC) with the ribbon-cutting and opening ceremonies led by Vice President Noli de Castro, along with ECOP chairman Miguel Varela, ECOP president Rene Soriano, Pag-IBIG Fund president Romero Federico Quimbo, PMS head secretary Rigoberto Tiglao, Jobs Fair chairperson Teresita Alegre, and Pasay City mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Expected to troop to the Jobs Fair organized by ECOP with the support of the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) and Pag-IBIG Fund are the unemployed from all walks of life but mostly the youth who, according to figures from the International Labor Organization (ILO), have reached an all time high with young people aged 18 to 24 now representing nearly half the world's jobless. Young people represent some 130 million of the world's 550 million working poor who work but are unable to lift themselves and their families above the equivalent of US$1 per day poverty line. These young people struggle to survive, often performing work under unsatisfactory conditions in the informal economy.

"The Jobs Fair is our contribution to alleviate the unemployment problem. We are bringing jobs closer to those looking for work," ECOP president Rene Y. Soriano pointed out. Also assisting ECOP in the Jobs Fair is the Pasay City Public Employment and Service Office (PESO).

Participating in the Jobs Fair are call centers, engineering and management consultancy firms as well as firms engaged in manufacturing and services. The Jobs Fair also features mini-lectures that will dwell on boosting an applicant's chance of landing a job such as RuralNet: Access to Countryside Job Applications and Postings; Call Center Cottage Industry: Building on Five9 Technology; Joining the Government Sector: Some Tips and Processes; Top Ten Skills Required by the Job Market; and Job Hunting Techniques.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES *05-4SG-030*
Annual House of Representatives Health Care Program for the Year 2006
House of Representatives, Quezon City

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The House of Representatives, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Annual House of Representatives Health Care Program for the Year 2006
Location	House of Representatives, Constitution Hills, Quezon City
Brief Description	*Comprehensive Health Maintenance Service Program for Members of the House of Representatives, House Officials and Rank and File Employees*
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 20,237,182 56
Contract Duration	*January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006*
Delivery Period	*January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006*

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A.

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 22 – Dec. 1, 2005
2. Pre-bid Conference	December 6, 2005
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements; Technical and Financial Proposals/Opening of Eligibility, Technical and Financial Envelopes	December 19, 2005
4. Bid Evaluation	December 19, 2005
5. Post-qualification	December 21, 2005
6. Notice of Award	December 29, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Ten Thousand Pesos Only (P10,000.00)** to the House of Representatives Cashier before 3.00 P.M.

The complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents may be obtained at the (Bids and Awards Committee-Secretariat) Office of the Procurement and Supply Management Service, South Wing Extension, c/o Mr. Dominador M. Gamboa, BAC-Secretariat Head (Tel. Nos. 931-5683 & 931-5001 loc. 7523 & 7398). Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals shall be placed in separate and marked sealed envelopes addressed to Atty. Leonardo B. Palicte III, Bids and Awards Committee Chairman, c/o the BAC-Secretariat and dropped in the bid box located at the Conference Room, Deputy Secretary General for Internal Audit, South Wing Basement, House of Representatives, National Government Center, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. **Deadline of submission and receipt of sealed bids shall be on Monday, December 19, 2005 at 2:00 P.M.**

The House of Representatives assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) ATTY. LEONARDO B. PALICTE III
BAC Chairman

(PDI – November 22 & 29, 2005)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID # 2005-19

The **PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION Bids & Awards Committee (PITC-BAC)** invites duly licensed SEC registered security agencies who can meet the following minimum requirements for eligibility and to bid for PITC's security services :

- In the Security agency business for at least five (5) years and still in operation
- Have existing branches/offices nationwide specifically in Pangasinan & Cebu
- With Stockholders' Equity of at least **P2 Million** as of December 31, 2004
- Must have valid License to Operate (LTO) issued by the Philippine National Police
- Must have valid Certificate of Membership with the Philippine Association of Detectives and Protection Agency Operators, Inc. (PADPAO)

Bid documents will be available for issuance during office hours starting November 25, 2005 until December 14, 2005, weekdays only, from the BAC Secretariat c/o Mrs. Helen R. Muncal at the 4th Floor of the NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas St. Salcedo Village, Makati City after payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).

The particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract are stated in the bid documents and shall be governed by the provisions of **R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.**

PITC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, waive any defects or informalities therein and/or accept the offer/s most advantageous and beneficial to the government. Further, the PITC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the prospective bidders for any expenses incurred in the processing of their eligibility to bid and/or in the preparation of the bid.

(SGD.) MARLENE R. LOPEZ
Chair, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--Nov. 23 & 29, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment,
Security Service and Supplies
(Gen. Appropriations Act 2005 & Continuing Appropriation)

1. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, through the General Appropriations Act 2005 and Continuing Appropriations intends to apply the sum of ***Php 28,766,000.00*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment (P 14,704,000.00), Security Service (P 1,000,000.00) and Supplies (P 13,062,000.00).*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for ***Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment, Security Service and Supplies***. Delivery of the GOODS required is: ***for supplies 10 days; for equipment 30-60 days and for Security service from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006***. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using nondiscretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITD. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL BAC Chairman, Dr Esperanza P. Galia and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Php 500.00 per category for supplies and Php 1,000.00 for equipment.*** The method of payment will be **Cash**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *November 30, 2005 / 2:00 PM at GCGMH Audio Visual Room.*
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the GCGMH Audio Visual Room on or before 10:00 A.M. on the scheduled opening of bids per category All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash	One percent (1%)
2. GSIS Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)

8. Bid opening shall be on the following schedules listed below at 10:00 A.M. at GCGMH Audio-Visual Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

Date	Category
December 12, 2005	Drugs and Medicine Supplies Miscellaneous Supplies Office Supplies Housekeeping Supplies Engineering Supplies Linen Supplies
December 14, 2005	Medical / Surgical Supplies Laboratory Supplies Security Service
December 19, 2005	Medical Equipment Non-Medical Equipment

9. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital
Dr. Esperanza P. Galia, BAC Chairman
Chief of Clinics Office
Miguel Parras St. Tagbilaran City, Bohol
Tel. No. (038) 411-4868 / (038) 411-4869 / (038) 501-7531 loc. 207
Fax No. (038) 411-4831
E-mail address: gcgmh@globelines.com.ph

(Sgd.) ESPERANZA P. GALIA, MD
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--Nov. 22 & 29, 2005)

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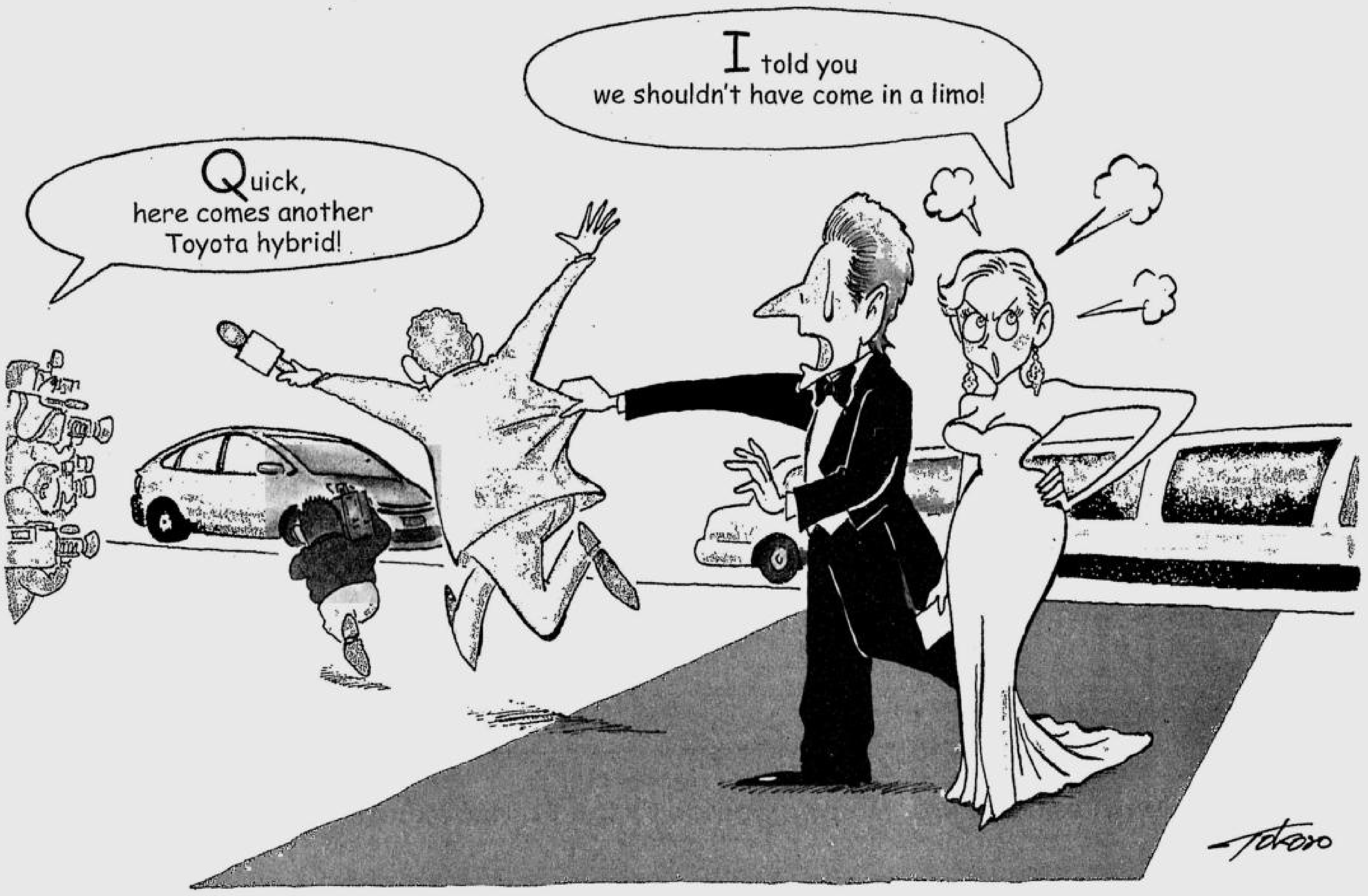
Toyota Technology Journal

Hybrid Innovation 3

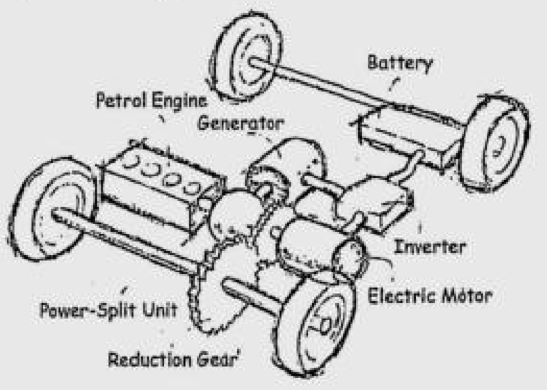

I told you we shouldn't have come in a limo!
Quick, here comes another Toyota hybrid!
Tokoro

Not just another pretty face

These days, more and more Hollywood stars are giving up their big limousines and arriving at award ceremonies in eco-friendly, petrol-electric Toyota Prius sedans. Why? Because they and their fans know that beauty and intelligence go hand-in-hand.

Toyota hybrid drive—the first production-model drive system to actually recycle energy—is the drive system of the future

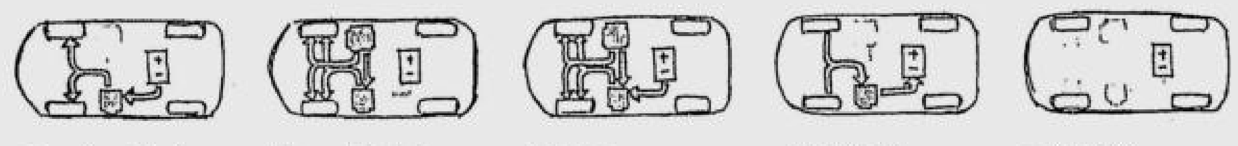
Toyota hybrid drive assures powerful standing-starts, and power to spare for exhilarating low-speed and high-speed acceleration. What's more, it uses regenerative braking to convert and recycle kinetic energy into electrical energy that can be stored in the vehicle's battery for later use. It's this advanced hybrid technology that makes the Prius a truly exciting and environmentally friendly car to drive.



The Toyota Hybrid System in Action

▨ Petrol Engine

▨ Electric Motor

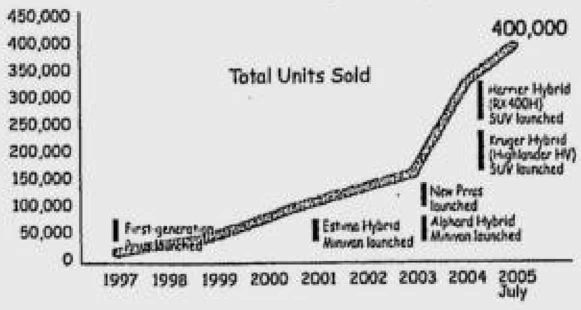


- **Standing Start & Low-Speed Acceleration**
  The electric motor draws power from the battery, assuring quick starts and superb low-speed acceleration.
- **Normal Driving**
  Power is provided by both the petrol engine and electric motor, continuously regulated to ensure maximum fuel efficiency.
- **Sudden Acceleration**
  The electric motor draws additional power from the battery to assure maximum power for exhilarating acceleration.
- **Braking & Deceleration**
  When the brakes are applied, the electric motor acts as a generator and converts kinetic energy into electricity that is used to charge the battery.
- **At Rest**
  When the vehicle is at rest, the engine and motor automatically switch off, reducing fuel consumption and emissions by eliminating wasteful engine idling.

Over 400,000* owners worldwide have recognised the value of Toyota hybrid technology

Since their introduction, the popularity of Toyota hybrid vehicles has soared, and there are now over 400,000 satisfied Toyota hybrid owners worldwide.

* Cumulative sales as of July 2005



Car of the Year in both North America and Europe—a "world's first" achievement

When it comes to Car of the Year awards, Europe and North America don't often agree. But the Toyota Prius proved its universal appeal by being named 2004 North American Car of the Year and 2005 European Car of the Year. It's the first car in history to win Car of the Year awards on both continents!

Prius sedan production line

Toyota hybrid technology — the new world standard for the automobile industry of tomorrow

TOYOTA

moving forward

PREVENTING shoulder injuries in sports /C3

LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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On sex drive, energy and beauty

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

YOU CAN FIND A BETTER WAY to live healthier and look better. So, in response to your questions, we share with you the latest approaches and innovations in the field of wellness.

Today, let's focus on health and beauty regimens, sex drives and energy levels.

Sex

Q: Is there a connection between how one feels and his/her sex drive?

Definitely. Remember that how you feel affects every part of your body. Therefore, if you are not feeling up to par, your sex drive is bound to suffer. Keep your energy levels up by:

1. Eating a balanced diet, specifically adding more vegetables and fruits to your meals.

2. Take supplements—multivitamin, multimineral, Vitamin E (dry form) 400 iu, Coenzyme-Q10 complex. For women, soy isolate complex with 1,000 mg calcium and 500 mg magnesium, and for men (over 45), saw palmetto and chelated zinc (15-50 mg), arginine (3-6 mg).

Note: A new star in the energy horizon is virgin coconut oil. Take two tablespoons on an empty stomach in the morning before breakfast (if you can manage this) or mix with oatmeal or fruit juice. This is a guaranteed energy booster to sustain you throughout the day and night.

3. Exercise regularly. Walk briskly every day in addition to your favorite exercise—badminton, swimming, aerobics, dancing, basketball, etc.

4. Take ginseng herbal tea daily.

5. Relax with mind, body therapies like yoga, pilates, meditation, massage.

Health and beauty

Q: Can one develop an allergy to hair dyes? I get red, scaly patches on my scalp after using any hair dye for three months.

Yes, you can develop an allergy. Stop the use of all hair dye products immediately. Rest your scalp for three months until the itching and redness disappear. Rub fresh aloe vera on the affected area of your scalp twice a day. Make sure you don't use the yellow liquid from the aloe as this may cause itching. Apply only the gel.

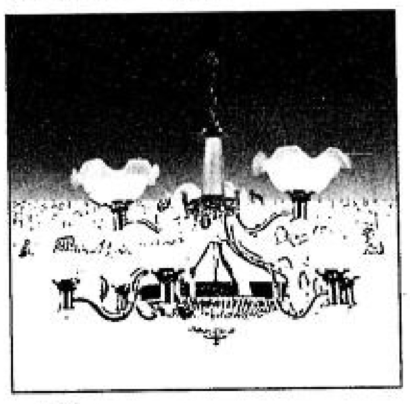
If this doesn't work, use coconut oil as a daily scalp treatment. Rinse your hair after an hour.

See your dermatologist for medical supervision.

Cholesterol

Q: When a product says it's low fat, is it also low in

ON SEX DRIVE/ C2



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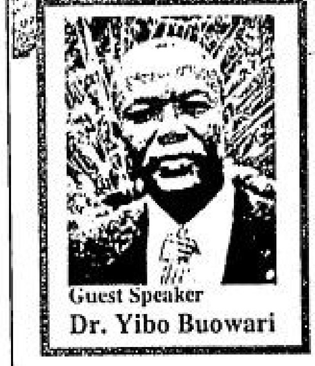

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CHING Montinola, Criselda Lontok, Menchu Concepcion and Lucille Villanueva; (standing) Chona Lopez, Margaret Kwok, the celebrator Nene L., Lorivi Valdez Campos and Marilou Prieto Lovina

INANG L., Zita Feliciano, Rory Eismendi and Danny Dolor; Clifford (standing) Chua, Ado Escudero and Allan Tengco

DR. JORGE and May Neri, Tereret Liboro, Joanne Salgado and Andy Liboro

A party of fashion plates

TEA time for Unilever corporate development manager Jika Dalupan

EYE-CATCHER Ria Romero

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

ONE OF THE NICEST BIRTHDAY PARTIES we attended was the celebration of one of Manille's top hostesses—**Nene Leonor**.

The gathering of Manille's social set was held at the new eye-catching North Forbes Park Pavilion, elegantly decorated by **Ramon Pastor** and cool **Cocoy Cordoba**, no less, *palanggas*. As in all of Nene's fun parties, dinner was excellent, catered by Cuilliere, with added yummy dishes from the hostess' own kitchen. Many invitees went back for seconds.

Everyone was a fashion plate, the pieces of jewelry worn by some of the women adding extra dazzle to the affair.

The celebrator was wearing a simple, elegant creation she picked up in the United States last summer. Rustan's very own, **Criselda Lontok**, was in a beautiful feathered number from her own collection, *natch*, while our *palangga*, Sen. **Loi Ejercito Estrada**, on a rare night-out, was in an ultra-sophisticated skirt bought during her last European trip. Other well-dressed ladies I noticed with my eagle eyes were FCCP president **Mellie Ablaza, Menchu Concepcion, Helen Ong, Emily Lopez**, head-turner **Ching Cruz, Mely Hechanova** with her fabulous jewelry, and eye-catching **Lia Leonor**.

Gorgeous **Che Singson** was casually chic in her cool top and jeans outfit, while **Justa Tantoco** was super chic in her Betty Clemo outfit from Hong Kong and diamond and pearl brooch and earrings.

Nene L.'s invitees consisted of her numerous pals from Manila's upper set to CWC friends, headed by president **Linda Pastoral**, her Cofradia group and her FCCP gang (Nene is a board member).

Après dinner, the women and men hit the dance floor and rocked till way past Cinderella's curfew, *palanggas*. "To get rid of all the calories I stuffed myself with," one guest told me.

Nene Leonor once again lived up to her reputation as hostess with the mostest! Cheers, *palangga*!

Heavenly

Today's love generation and stylishly sexy clubbers got a taste of a new brand of disco, *palanggas*. Over 4,000 stylish partyphiles flocked to the Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC) on Roxas Boulevard, when the undisputed leader in international dance event promotions, Bigfish—but who else, dahlings?—with the full support of Addict Mobile and the so-friendly Nokia, presented Hed Kandi Disco Heaven.

DJ **Jaimie Richards** of Hed Kandi UK headlined the gig, dishing out cool, soulful music that kept the crowd of old-school clubbers and the new breed of Addict Mobile partyphiles literally rocking and rolling until way past dawn.

The unbeatable Bigfish production rah! rah! team mounted a spectacular event, with state-of-the-art light and sound systems. In a fun, quirky homage to the swinging disco days of yore, sparkling disco balls in the ceiling providing luminous twinkling lights, as all of us swayed to the beat, *palanggas*.

The partying gang included vivacious **Jessica Guevarra**; Metro's **Ipe Cruz**, with PLDT's **David Nugent**; honeymooners **JP** and **Hilary Bautista**; Embassy's **Eric Cua**, with DJs **Martin Pulgar** and **Owens Sun**; super buddies, Circuit's fun **JR Isaac** and Marie Claire's woman of taste and style **Myrza Sison**; new breed of clubber **Bea Locsin**, with **Martin Ledesma**; Bigfish's First Lady **Pixie Cheah**, with First/Act8's **Ricky Daker**; Ogilvy's **Gabby Katigbak**, with actor **Robin da Roza**; and everyone's favorite hotshot party couple, our *palanggas* **Domini** and **Joanne Priimero** of Team Bigfish, *natch*, plus thousands more like them.

Hey, thanks to Addict Mobile and Nokia, we had a blast!

Cool brew

It's tea time, *palanggas*. That's what's brewing in our town—tea, and it's here to stay.

Tea is in. Coffee, once the hottest drink of choice, may no longer have the cachet it has had for the longest time. Tons of celebrities are being photographed holding a cup of tea, instead of coffee.

Let's name-drop: **Kirsten Dunst, Scarlett Johansson** and **Mischa Barton** have all been seen sipping the suddenly fashionable drink after a long night in town.

As the trend for a truly healthier lifestyle (which is about time, I must say) continues, focusing on more exercise and ways to get fitter and better-looking, loads of cool adults are looking for better options. It seems they found it, dahlings, in tea.

Why tea? Well, *après* an absolutely yummy-yummy lunch at the incomparable People's Palace in Greenbelt 3, *moi* found out that tea was filled with so many goodies. For starters, tea contained significant amounts of flavonoid antioxidants that protected the body form harmful cancer-causing free radicals, helped unclog the arteries and veins, and prevented bacterial infection.

"Theanine," a unique amino acid found only in tea, helped clear the mind and made one relaxed yet mentally alert. It had been found to stimulate production of the chemical dopamine in the brains to make you happy.

Popular Lipton Yellow Label Tea, the country's No. 1 brand, had three hot shakers—**Tim Yap, Celine Lopez** and **Hindy Weber-Tantoco**—together with **Paolo Abrera**, show tea lovers some of their own cool brews.

Superb host **Ala Paredes** cited tea's endless heavenly possibilities as the healthiest, coolest drink on the planet—a little yummy spice from cinnamon or a cool fruity punch from lemon zest, or creamy goodness with a dash of milk.

Anyone for tea, coffee or me?

THE BLACK BRIGADE: (seated) Karen Macasaet, Sen. Loi Ejercito and Justa Tantoco; Chit Dee, birthday lady Nene L., Cinderella's Therese Santos and our *palangga*, Baby Magsaysay

BIGFISH FAMILY. Main man Domini Primero, renowned international DJ Jaimie Richards and Pixie Cheah

CLOCKWISE from top: Jeff Serrano and Carmina Sanchez; Rustan's Mariko Jacinto and Bigfish's beauty queen, Joanne Primero; and Carl Garcia and Joy Tan

OUR host Ala Paredes, with Paolo Abrera

LIPTON's brand manager Gara Santos and Lipton Yellow Label assistant brand manager Paul Cuaso

On sex drive, energy and beauty

From page C1

cholesterol?

No. There is a world of difference. Low fat is not the same as low cholesterol. Because even if it's cholesterol-free, it may still be high in fat. Cholesterol is used by the body to transport fat. And fat is used by the body as energy. Example: Unsaturated fat like vegetable or fruit contains no cholesterol, though the avocado is high in fat.

Foods with cholesterol: saturated fats, all animal fats, also coconut and palm oils. Note: Latest studies have proven that virgin coco oil is a medium-chain fatty acid and is used by the body as energy and is not stored as fat.

Always remember that a high-fat (particularly saturated fat) diet can raise your cholesterol levels, especially if your intake of salt, sugar and caffeine is high. And if you do not exercise you put your health at risk.

No surgery sexy bod

Q: Should I believe all these ads that guarantee a sexy body without surgery?

There are many promising cosmetic treatments in the market if you can afford them. However, the old-fashioned prescription that includes diet and exercise is still better. Cosmetic treatments (whether surgical or non-surgical) may enhance your image by polishing and smoothing your body. But if you do not have the discipline to embrace a healthy lifestyle, it is almost certain that you will gain back within months the inches and fat you lose.

Dainty feet

Q: Can you recommend a regimen for younger-looking feet? My problems include dryness and rough heels, as well as varicose veins.

The feet, especially women's feet, are parts of the body that are much-abused. High heels force your feet to slide forward thus making you more prone to calluses and bunions. In time, prolonged use will shorten your Achilles tendon so that wearing flat shoes may become painful or uncomfortable. If you wear sandals every day, exposure to sun and pollution can dry your feet.

Feet soak: a pan of warm water. Dip your feet for three minutes in the pan after rubbing them with your favorite oil (olive, coco, almond, castor). Afterwards, scrub feet with loofah or rock salt while still wet. Make it a habit to put your feet up for 15 minutes at the end of the day.

Varicose veins can get worse in time if left unattended. Spider veins (tiny thread-like veins in blue or red colors) and varicose veins may need medical attention. Go to a vein clinic or consult your dermatologist. Note: It is best to consult a vascular surgeon for big, bulging varicose veins. You may call Dr. Sergio Simangan, St. Luke's Hospital, Lauren Vein Center, at 8939771, 7231023.

Your Affirmation:

"All is well with me and my life. And I declare it so."

Love and light!

Free medical services available

HEALTHWAY, THE largest chain of outpatient medical centers in Metro Manila, will open its newest branch at Market! Market! at the Global City in Taguig.

Ongoing is the pre-launch promo dubbed "Healthy! Healthy! at Market! Market!" that provides shoppers free medical services, including a check of blood pressure, random blood sugar and body mass index.

Customers who participate in this promo can also have free consultation with a Healthway doctor, an invitation to the opening of the clinic and other giveaways.

Healthway has branches at SM City North Edsa, Robinsons Place Manila, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Alabang Town Center and Festival Mall. Call 8923731 or text 0917-8006710.

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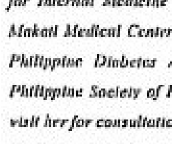
What complications can result from diabetes?

The complications of diabetes are divided into Acute and Chronic. Acute complications include Diabetic Ketoacidosis and Hyperosmolar Hyperglycemic Syndrome, which arise due to uncontrolled hyperglycemia. Hypoglycemia is a potentially serious complication of treatment in type 2 diabetic patients, especially among the elderly, people with renal insufficiency and people with severe and micro angiopathy. The most important chronic complications of type 2 diabetes are those affecting blood vessels and nerves. The microvascular complications (retinopathy, nephropathy and neuropathy) are relatively specific to diabetes. Diabetic Retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness among the working age adult population. Likewise, diabetic nephropathy is the most common cause of renal failure. The earliest stages are evidenced by microalbuminuria, progressing to macroalbuminuria or overt proteinuria, with subsequent rise in creatinine, eventually leading to renal failure and the need for dialysis and transplantation. In parallel to the progressive decline in renal function, there is a significant increase in the risk of cardiovascular disease, which is manifest at the stage of microalbuminuria. People with diabetes are, in general, up to 30 times more likely to require a lower limb amputation compared to the general population. Diabetic foot ulcers result from complex interaction between peripheral neuropathy, peripheral arterial disease or poor foot hygiene. Neuropathic ulcers are usually seen at signs of repetitive pressure (plantar surface of the metatarsal heads and dorsum of the toes). Ischemic ulcers typically occur at the tips of the toes and on the heel.



This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Batangas City, Dr. Carolyn Narvacan Montano. Dra. Carol is specializes in IM- Endocrinology. She obtained her medical degree from the University of Sto. Tomas. She took her residency training for Internal Medicine and subspecialization training in Endocrinology from Makati Medical Center. She is affiliated with Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Diabetes Association, Philippine Medical Association and the Philippine Society of Endocrinology & Metabolism. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at Daniel Mercado Medical Center, Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 9:00am to 1pm. Mary Mediatrix Medical Center, Tuesdays & Thursdays, from 9am to 4pm and Saturdays 9am to 1pm

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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Preventing shoulder injuries in sports

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

ANY SPORT REQUIRING REPETITIVE overhead movements may cause shoulder injuries.

Often, overuse of the joint is the cause of the injury. This can be frustrating for both competitive and recreational athletes who spend hours practicing to become good in their sport.

So how does an "overhead" athlete prevent shoulder joint problems and still log in the necessary training time?

The three most important guidelines are: increase training time and intensity gradually, strengthen/stretch the rotator cuff muscles, and strengthen the core muscles for better transfer of power generation from the legs and trunk to the shoulders and arms.

Proper technique also goes a long way in preventing shoulder injuries in sports. Here are some tips which may help from sports publications and sports medicine websites.

Swimming

Swimming.About.Com

"Avoid swimming freestyle at every workout even if you are training for a triathlon. You will get a better cross-training effect by including other strokes and, more importantly, avoid an overuse injury.

"One of the most important things in stroke technique when it comes to freestyle and avoiding shoulder injuries is to bend your elbows underwater during the pull. This is proper form and will keep you from putting your shoulder in an awkward position that leads to a rotator cuff problem.

"Avoid breathing on only one side because you will develop the muscles more on one side than the other, and this could cause a shoulder problem. Incorporate bilateral breathing into your workouts.

"Avoid the excessive use of pull buoys and paddles because they give you a false sense of flotation and put unnecessary tension on your shoulder joints."

Peak Performance Digest

"Avoid insufficient body roll, catching the water too close to the midline, not keeping the shoulder blade stabilized on the trunk during the pull phase, and not keeping the elbow high enough during the recovery phase."

CoachesInfo.Com

"Freestylers and backstrokers, who swim with an insufficient or improper body roll, place too much emphasis upon using shoulder muscles as 'prime movers' to provide positioning, propulsion, and recovery. It also forces the arm to recover in a position parallel to the water's surface, which can cause shoulder impingement. If proper hip and shoulder rolls are utilized, these elements come from the major trunk muscles, therefore reducing stress upon the shoulder muscles."

Tennis

Hughston Sports Medicine Foundation

"Rotator cuff tendonitis in recreational tennis players usually results from excessive overhead serving. This is more likely to occur if you hold your arm at a 90-degree angle from your side while you are serving. Changing your technique to increase the angle between your arm and side to more than 90 degrees (ideally 135 degrees) will lessen the chance of injury to your rotator cuff."

SportsFirst.Com

"One of the main reasons for shoulder injuries in tennis is many people step onto the court and overhit the first few overhead shots and serves, therefore straining those muscles. Instead, hit half-speed or quarter-speed overheads for the first ten balls that you hit. Do this also with your serve.

"Men have more of a problem with overhitting their serve than do women. Men generally are more aggressive when they first come onto the court. All overheads and serves should be half-speed to three-quarters speed when you first start warming up.

"A good way to stretch the muscles and tendons in the shoulder is to practice your service motion without hitting a ball 10-12 times. Do this at half-speed, slowly working your way to game speed."

Badminton

According to Danish researcher Uffe Jorgenson of the University of Copenhagen, overhead movements are not only the cause of rotator-cuff injuries. Functional studies have revealed that there is much more shoulder rotation involved in the forehand and backhand stroke in badminton than was previously believed, "with the internal/external rotation of the shoulder as the greatest force-producing movement."

The conclusion of these studies indicates that rotator-cuff strengthening exercises should be a must for all badminton players to prevent shoulder injuries.

Golf

Shoulder1.Com

"The lead shoulder (left in a right-handed golfer, right for the left-handed) is subjected to the most stress during the swing, so it is not uncommon for golfers to develop rotator-cuff tears or other problems in the shoulder blade such as impingement or arthrosis (joint disease).

"There is some suggestion that most shoulder injuries are actually due to an excessive swing, and that in particular an exaggerated backswing is often the source of the problem."

Sports Injury Bulletin

"To avoid shoulder injuries to the lead arm, shorten your swing by ending the backswing with the club head at a 10-o'clock, instead of a 3-o'clock, position... This will reduce stress on the leading shoulder without sacrificing club-head speed."

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

One-legged squat

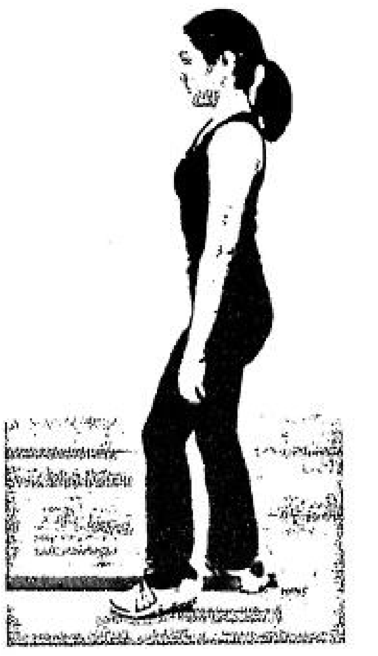
FIRMS THE MUSCLES in the buttocks, front and back of the thighs

Equipment:

No equipment

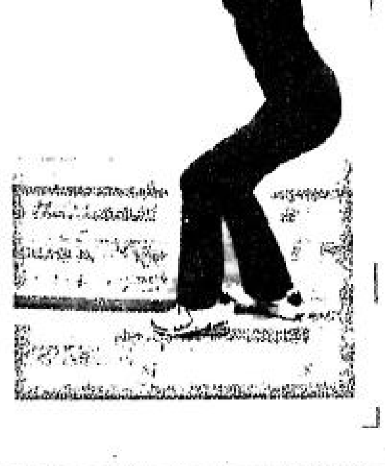
Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your left leg in front of the right. The ball of your left foot is touching the floor and the knee is slightly bent. The right leg is straight.
2. Bend both knees as you squat by pushing your buttocks behind you but keep your right foot flat on the floor. Your body weight remains over the heel of your supporting right leg.
3. As you bend your knees, extend your left arm up to shoulder height for balance.
4. Slowly stand up out of the squat.
5. Do the necessary repetitions, then switch legs.



Performance tips:

1. Start the squat by pretending to sit on an imaginary stool behind you.
2. Squeeze your buttocks and thigh muscles to stand up out of the squat.
3. Keep your back straight with a natural curve in your spine all throughout the exercise.
4. The body bends at the hips and not the spine when "sitting" into the squat.
5. If this exercise bothers your knees, in spite of doing it properly, stop.



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